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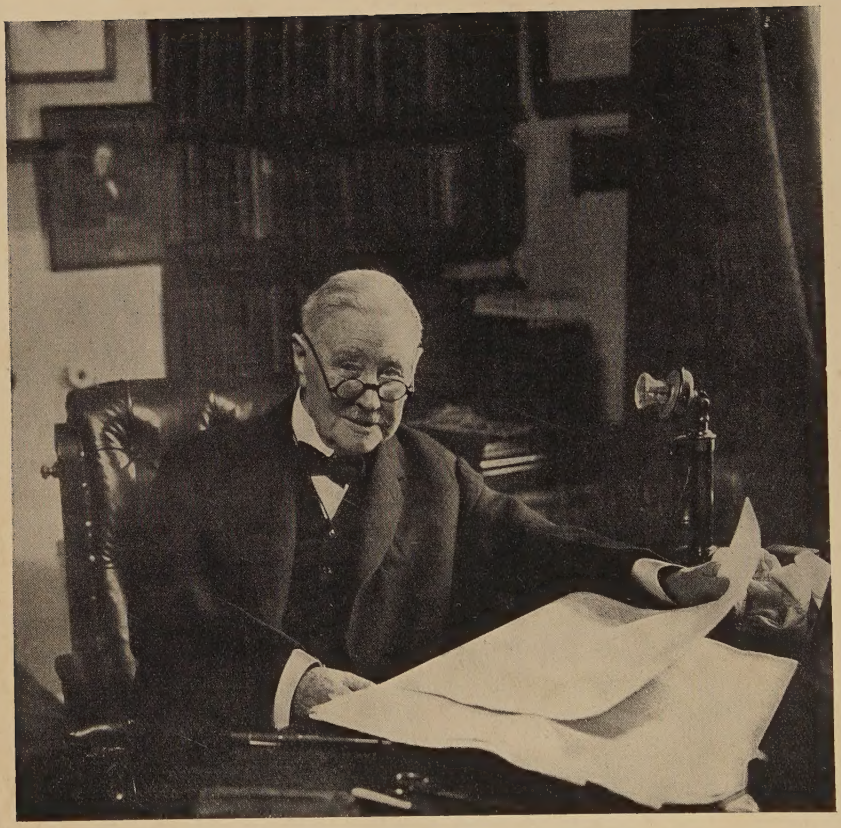
VOLUME II



Mr. O'Connor shortly after his eightieth birthday

Frontispiece Vol. II.

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MEMOIRS OF AN OLD PARLIAMENTARIAN

by

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P.

VOLUME II

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CHAPTER I

The General Election of 1885—Parnell's nervousness—Captain O'Shea's Liverpool candidature—Irish anti-Liberal manifesto—A semi-alliance with the Tories—A confusion of parties—Mr. Bradlaugh takes the oath.

MY readers who have followed me thus far into these memoirs will now have grasped the revolutionary change wrought into English politics by Parnell and his small Party. When he joined in the single-handed game of obstruction played by Biggar, and Parnell brought down upon himself the wrath of poor old Isaac Butt, who indeed had worked in the service of his country according to his lights, it was not in human vision to foresee in these two voices crying in the political wilderness the beginning of a movement that was to change the whole aspect of British and Irish politics.

The Rise of Parnell, 1880–1885

Nor did Parnell himself at first foresee whither that movement would take him, and where it would set him down. I have already related how in May 1880, when three of us met Parnell in Dublin on the way to the meeting of Irish members, he was taken aback at being told that we intended to propose him as chairman of the Party. But once we had won him over to our view, he went wholeheartedly into the fight and voted for his own election. And with our arrival in London as a party, shorn of the place-hunting majority that we had defeated, we sat in opposition and moved an amendment to the Address. Thus, unostentatiously, an unformed thing of no signifi-

cance as it seemed, and beneath the contempt of the two great historic parties that had held the field for so long, the movement began that was to dominate their fray for nearly half a century.

The reader has watched that movement grow, in the narrative of my first volume, to proportions wider than the shores of Ireland, and against which the most callous methods of repression were ineffectual. He has seen how we began the session of 1880, the only Irish tradition behind us in that House being an ignoble record of place-hunting, selfishness, and graft; how until our time the electors were bought and the country sold periodically as each new set of men came up; and how, whenever any with honest motives came in, they were overwhelmed in the general scrimmage of the office-seekers.

So it was natural that the House of Commons could not immediately recognize a changed Irishman from the old ruck of Parliamentary hail-fellows from Ireland who all had their price, the reward for venial service rendered. And so we began the session with the reek of that dishonourable tradition clinging to us, the majority of the so-called Irish Party sitting meanwhile with the Government, voting against us and disowning us. And then the reader has marked the growing vehemence of that movement, of which Parnell and a score of men—most of them young and without established position in life—were the spearheads; how they overturned custom and usage; how they strained the Parliamentary machine beyond all social endurance; how they were shouted down, suspended, imprisoned, ostracized; and how their own countrymen, recognizing unselfish friends, and those of them who had been exiled to the ends of the earth, rallied to them, so that the movement begun in obscurity became of world-wide significance.

The Queen and Gladstone

And it has been seen that Ireland, under the urge of this movement, had gradually possessed the mind of Gladstone, and set him on with devotion to the idea of her emancipation, so that at the time this narrative approaches he was to make the bold leap to Home Rule that took English people's breath away.

With the fact accomplished nowadays, all that hubbub may seem strange; but the younger generation who cannot understand these things have only to examine the literature and speeches of the time to see how Gladstone's decisive advance was regarded with horror; how to so many otherwise well-balanced minds dismemberment of the Empire should seem imminent; how the then Prince of Wales expressed the opinion that Gladstone's mind was going, and how the Queen was urging upon friends of his that he should retire from active leadership and go up to the Lords, where he would be impotent to carry forward these revolutionary proposals into which she read a menace to the very throne.

I now proceed with the narrative from the point to which I had taken it at the close of the previous volume. We had brought down Gladstone's Government, our five years' work together had told, and we were going to the country with victory on our side assured. Parnell was now the idol of the Irish people. But all this time our leader was holding a dreadful secret, and was engulfed in that passionate affair to which he must have brought the same quality of earnestness and intensity that he showed in his political life.

I was soon to get evidences of the bursting of the cloud. I went over to Dublin to be present at an important gathering of the Party which had been called to discuss

our policy generally, and above all to discuss what was a vital point, namely, the pledge which had to be signed by every candidate and every member. This was the pledge:

"I pledge myself that, in the event of my Election to Parliament, I will Sit, Act, and Vote with the Irish Parliamentary Party, and will support in Parliament and in the Country every decision come to by the majority of the Party; and if, at a meeting of the Party convened upon due notice specially to consider the question, it be determined by resolution, supported by a majority of the Irish Party, that I have not fulfilled the above pledges, I hereby undertake to resign my seat."

Gladstone Government falls, June 1885

We knew, of course, that we were going to have a tremendous victory in the coming election, and that the representation of three-fourths of the constituencies of all Ireland would ultimately prove such a demonstration of our strength and of the opinion of Ireland as to be irresistible. I have already noted that a constant argument against us in the Parliament of 1880 to 1885 was that for some time, though we claimed to speak in the name of the majority of the Irish people, we did not represent the majority of even the Irish Nationalist members. At the beginning of that Parliament, as I have already said, the nominal Home Rulers were larger in numbers than we of the Parnellite Party.

I remember distinctly that meeting of the Irish National League just before the General Election. When called on by Parnell to speak, I had to push my way through the thick masses of the enthusiastic crowd. I wound up my speech with a ringing and hopeful peroration which practically amounted to the statement that at last,

after all these centuries of struggle, we were within sight of the promised land of Home Rule for our country. Parnell complimented me warmly on the speech.

The next day there happened one of those little incidents which was a surprising revelation to me of the nervousness from which Parnell was suffering—a surprising thing always in a man so habitually self-controlled. There had been a pretty heated discussion between Mr. Tim Healy and Mr. Harrington—both gentlemen of somewhat hot tempers and unrestrained language—as to the particular form which the new pledge was to take. It was not pleasant, but it was not devastating; but when I went back with Parnell to his hotel he ordered immediately a cup of tea, explaining to me that these scenes made him very nervous. Then we sat down to talk over the speech he had to make at a dinner of his Party that night.

Parnell, as I have over and over again said, was not a man of very ready speech; and perorations were beyond him. I dashed off a peroration for him which he duly delivered at the dinner.

It was on the same occasion, if I remember rightly, that Parnell revealed to me the strong distrust he had of Mr. Healy. At that time Mr. Healy was perhaps my warmest and closest friend in the Irish Party. Parnell said that Healy was "a selfish man"; I shook my head in dissent; and then, almost angrily, though in a quiet voice, Parnell turned to me and asked if I thought himself one who would form or express opinions of men without adequate reason. And there I had to let the matter rest. Parnell was not a man with whom any of us was disposed to enter into controversy. I never heard him say a rude thing to anybody, but there was a strange power in those eyes of his when he turned their full blaze upon you; I have seen many a man quail before their look.

At a very early period in the elections there were portents of the coming of that thunderstorm which was to wreck Parnell and Ireland. The first disturbing sense of it came to me on finding O'Shea travelling in the same carriage with Parnell and myself when we were going over to Ireland. I don't know what was the motive, but O'Shea, looking out at rather a good-looking girl passing up and down the platform of one of the stations, remarked that *they* were a very much overrated pleasure, which I interpreted as having a hidden reference to the story of his wife and Parnell. When O'Shea left the carriage for some moments and Parnell and I were left alone, Parnell, with one of his occasional abashed smiles, said to me, "I wonder is there any chance of his getting a seat". I shook a very emphatic "No".

O'Shea nominated for Liverpool

Meantime the enemies both of O'Shea and Parnell had been at work. One of the hopes of O'Shea was that he might be elected as a Liberal member for one of the Ulster seats. (At that time there were several Liberals in the Ulster representation, hostile, it is true, to Home Rule, but advanced on the question of land reform.) Somehow or other this purpose became known, and at once the selection of some other candidate was hurried on, mainly, I believe, by Mr. Healy; and this door was closed to O'Shea.

The next important incident at this fateful time was when Parnell suddenly turned up at Liverpool. I had by this time become to some extent identified more prominently than my colleagues with the Irish in Great Britain, a powerful body of electors who held in their hands the fate of several English constituencies. I had become already President of the National League of Great

Britain, and I remained President of it for more than forty years, practically without any competition or contest. Parnell was present on the occasion when I was nominated as candidate for the Scotland Division at a big meeting; but I think it was some days afterwards that I was astounded to find Parnell back again in Liverpool. I was quite in a position to deal with the situation there and with that in Great Britain generally, and Parnell's presence for that purpose was quite unnecessary. The explanation came soon. Scotland Division was quite secure for me, but Parnell, without any consultation with me or anybody else I knew of, suddenly nominated two other Irishmen—Mr. John Redmond for Kirkdale and O'Shea for the Exchange Division; and it was somewhat humiliating to Redmond and myself to find ourselves bracketed with O'Shea in the strong appeal of Parnell to return the "three Irishmen" for these three seats. Kirkdale for Redmond was quite hopeless, but there was a fair chance of winning Exchange Division, which had in its electorate a large number of English Liberals and even a larger number of Irish Nationalists. There had been a Liberal candidate put in the field already, but some negotiations of which we knew nothing had taken place behind the scenes, and Stephens, the first Liberal candidate, was induced to resign, but not before he had been nominated; and therefore, as he still stood on the ballot papers, he attracted some of the votes which might have gone to O'Shea.

An Election Manifesto, 1885

I have spoken of negotiations which, of course, must have been secret, and certainly were not known to me. The very first thing which I proposed to Parnell when the General Election of 1885 came on was a manifesto to the

Irish people of Great Britain with regard to the vote they should give.

It called upon the Irish voters in Great Britain to vote everywhere against "the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menace religious liberty in the school, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promise to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration".

The reasons for this attitude were explained at length in the address.

"The Liberal Party are making an appeal to the confidence of the electors at the General Election of 1885, as at the General Election of 1880, on false pretences. In 1880 the Liberal Party promised peace, and it afterwards made unjust wars; economy, and its Budget reached the highest point yet attained; justice to aspiring nationalities, and it mercilessly crushed the national movement in Egypt under Arabi Pasha, and murdered thousands of Arabs 'rightly struggling to be free'.

"To Ireland, more than to any other country, it bound itself by most solemn pledges, and these it most flagrantly violated. It denounced coercion, and it practised a system of coercion more brutal than that of any previous administration, Liberal or Tory. Under this system juries were packed with a shamelessness unprecedented even in Liberal administrations, and innocent men were hanged or sent to the living death of penal servitude; twelve hundred men were imprisoned without trial; and for a period every utterance of the popular press, or of the popular meeting, was as completely suppressed as if Ireland were Poland and the administration of England a Russian autocracy. The Liberals began by menacing the Established Church, and, under the name of free schools, made an insidious attempt to crush a religious education of the country, to establish a system of State tyranny and intolerance, and to fetter the right of conscience, which is as sacred in the selection of the school as in the free

selection of one's church. The cry of Disestablishment has been dropped, the cry of Free Schools has been explained away, and the two last cries left to the Liberal Party are the so-called reform of procedure and the demand to be independent of the Irish Party.

"Reform of procedure means a new gag, and the application to all enemies of Radicalism in the House of Commons of the despotic methods and the mean machinery of the Birmingham caucus. The specious demand for a majority against the Irish Party is an appeal for power to crush all anti-Radical members in Parliament first; then to propose to Ireland some scheme doomed to failure, because of its unsuitability to the wants of the Irish people; and finally to force down a halting measure of self-government upon the Irish people, by the same methods of wholesale imprisonment by which durability was sought for the impracticable Land Act of 1881."

It will be seen that this manifesto did not err on the side of reserve; it was a very slashing and a very ruthless criticism of the Liberal Government, and was an open and passionate plea to the Irish electors of Great Britain to vote for the Tory candidates. The consultation between Parnell and myself with regard to this manifesto took place in our small offices at Palace Chambers. Parnell proposed no change in it except to add after the word "Liberals"—"and Radicals". But somehow or other I felt that his reception of my manifesto was somewhat tepid, and I know now that at that very moment he was in consultation with Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Chief Liberal Whip, as to some deal by which, in the general ruck of denounced Liberals, there might be room in the arrangements to include O'Shea as the Liberal candidate for the Exchange Division. I may add that it was in connection with this manifesto that I first met Mrs. Pankhurst. She came to beg me to count her husband amid the few Liberals who were to be excepted from the ban against

their Party as a whole. I had to refuse most unwillingly, for her husband had always been a friend of Home Rule; and with her soft blue eyes and her gentle manner she was a powerful advocate.

O'Shea defeated

Everybody knew of the gigantic burden that was on Parnell's shoulders in directing the election in Ireland and that his presence was never more necessary in Ireland than at that moment. But there he was, on the morning of the poll, at Liverpool, and in a strange mood. He was evidently intensely excited, and he concentrated all his efforts that day upon the one constituency of Exchange. He was like a man possessed; he consulted all the election agents on our side, and if he were told of any voter who was doubtful or on his sick bed, in a second he was in a hansom and rushing down to the doubtful voter. He worked like a demon. The result did not justify his extraordinary exertions; Captain O'Shea was second on the poll. The numbers were: Conservative, 2964; Captain O'Shea, 2909; Liberal, 36. If that miserable majority of fifty-five had been the other way, all the subsequent history of Parnell and of Ireland would have been different.

The great ambition of O'Shea was to be returned to Parliament, and above all to be returned as a Liberal. He had a constant and obstinate ambition far beyond his merits, intellectual or political; and I believe his obsession had been for many years to be Chief Secretary for Ireland; already he had for years tried to guide the relations between the Liberals and ourselves on Liberal lines, and in that work he had been assisted considerably by Mr. Chamberlain, who, at that moment, was so hostile to

some of the actions of his own Government and who was one of the chief agents in producing the downfall of Mr. Forster; it was at that period, too, that there began the use of O'Shea's wife as an intermediary between the Liberal Party and Parnell—interventions of which the colleagues of Parnell knew nothing.

A good deal has been said, not altogether accurate, of these communications from Parnell through Mrs. O'Shea. There was a dim suspicion of them among the Irish members, and of course it was one of many causes that made for that violent dislike and suspicion of O'Shea that was to burst out with such fury at the Galway election. One of the suggestions also in the notorious book of Captain Peter Wright was that Mr. Gladstone, being made quite well acquainted with these communications and with Mrs. O'Shea as the intermediary, must have known all about the relations between Parnell and that lady. There was a much simpler explanation, as will be seen later on.

Nothing was more extraordinary in the story of Parnell and his associates than the gulf which divided him from them outside the House of Commons. For some years, especially in the years of all-night obstruction, Parnell was as assiduous as any member of his Party, not even excepting myself, who, as I have already said, began my day often in the House of Commons at one o'clock in the afternoon and ended it, night after night, at four o'clock in the morning. Usually, when I went there to lunch, I found Parnell, and we lunched together; he confining himself to either a fried sole or a chop and a pint of thin German wine.

But as time went on Parnell's appearances at the House became less frequent, and latterly there were weeks when we never caught sight of him. He carried his ab-

stention from attendance to almost incredible lengths. I have been present at a meeting of seventy members of the Party summoned to discuss a matter of considerable importance, and summoned by a special circular from Parnell himself. And Parnell was not present, nor even represented by a note of apology.

Such was our constant terror of doing anything that might be, or might be represented as, disloyal to Parnell, that I have seen the seventy men leave Committee Room 15 (where the Party used to meet) without a word and with some shamefacedness. No secret was better kept, and for so long, as the liaison of Parnell with Mrs. O'Shea. He himself resorted to every kind of method, as I have already told, to hide his movements. Whispers there were, but I can say with perfect accuracy that until the Galway election the story was not told, even in private conversation or in the meetings, public or private, of the Irish Party.

Thus ended the first attempt of Parnell to lay the spectre with which O'Shea was constantly haunting him.

Our Campaign in Great Britain

Meantime I entered upon one of the strangest enterprises of my life. It was my business to follow up our fierce anti-Liberal manifesto, which I have already given, by speeches to the Irish electors in the British constituencies. I spoke night after night, usually for an hour; sometimes I spoke twice, at two meetings in two different towns. I look back on myself of that time as a man almost a stranger to me, with incessant power of working at fever heat and apparently without the least injury to my health. All I suffered from then, as in America, was the private conversation which people insisted on imposing upon me when my brain was exhausted by the public meetings. In

the end, from the habit of travelling so much, I got to regard a railway carriage (when possible, I travelled alone) as my real home and my real retreat. I spent the time reading, usually a good novel, and, of course, had not to think of the speech I had to make at the coming meeting in the evening.

I once said in the House of Commons that I had made the same speech for forty years; it was partially true. I had the good luck—from that point of view—not to be reported in the English papers and so what to a second meeting in the same town might have been stale stuff was to the others quite fresh. My voice sometimes gave way, and a slight hoarseness with which I began a campaign nearly always remained with me to the end; but I managed to overcome it successfully enough for speaking purposes.

I am amused when I look back on some of my experiences. I can see still the rosy-cheeked and fat, cheery figure of a parson who sat right in the front of the platform from which I was speaking, and the roars of delighted laughter with which he received my very lively sallies at the expense of the Liberal Government. As a rule these speeches were received by my own countrymen with delight. There reached over the years of coercion in Ireland, over the multitudinous imprisonments and the frequent hangings and verdicts given by packed juries, memories which roused in them that spirit of vindictiveness which is one of the strong passions and occasionally one of the damaging weaknesses of Irish character; so that to vote and work against the Liberal candidates became a sacred and a welcome duty.

These activities of mine attracted the attention and—to me what was then flattering—the criticism of Mr. Gladstone. He himself was campaigning with almost as much vigour as I. In a speech in Flintshire, he said—

"Now as to the operation of the Irish vote . . . what we want in this country, after all, is the voice of Ireland from Ireland, the voice of England, Scotland and Wales from England, Scotland and Wales. That is not the voice which some of the counties of England have been using. Lancashire has spoken. But if you listen to her accents, you will find that they are strongly tinged with the Irish brogue. I do not say this upon my own authority; I say it upon one much higher. There is Mr. T. P. O'Connor [groans and hisses for 'Parnell']. Well, gentlemen, I must believe, until I know the contrary, that he is acting according to his conscience. I am going to call a witness. There is Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who has thrown a flood of light on this subject. You probably have not seen a letter of his addressed to the *Freeman's Journal*, in which he sets forth in detail the effect of the Irish vote upon Lancashire, Yorkshire and other elections, and he thinks he shows it is certain he is not far wrong that 25 seats have been carried over by that Irish vote from the Liberal to the Tory camp. . . ."

While I was carrying on the tremendous campaign against the Liberals in the country, there was going on, unknown to me, and unknown to any Irish member except Mr. Henry Campbell, who had been appointed the successor to Mr. Healy in the confidence of Parnell, a continuous series of negotiations between Gladstone and Parnell, with Mrs. O'Shea as the intermediary.

Selecting the Party

Once or twice I was called to Dublin by the urgent request of Mr. Henry Campbell, who was then acting as Parnell's secretary. I remember once—I daresay it happened twice—that I got a private and confidential note from Campbell to come over from London to a meeting for the selection of candidates. Probably never in the

history of Parliamentary institutions was there a stranger method of electing the representatives of a nation. A meeting was held in a room of Morrison's Hotel, where Parnell habitually stayed when in Dublin. Parnell sat at the head of the table; around him were prominent members who lived in Dublin, of whom Mr. Healy was one; Parnell rarely took any part in the discussions. Names were submitted; such local information as could be got about them was mentioned; then, after a comparatively short discussion, the name was chosen, and the choice of that name by this small committee meant practically his election as member.

Arrangements were made for a convention to nominate the member. These conventions were presided over by a member of the Party; he came there with his written instructions, the first of which was to get the man through who had been chosen by the committee in Dublin. He had also in many cases a second or third name up his sleeve, so to speak. In some cases where a candidate was known as somewhat undesirable, the chairman was expected to take any and every measure to prevent his being chosen.

These conventions were preceded in many cases, of course, by very active wire-pulling, especially for the local candidate, and it required all the dexterity and the firmness of the chairman to get the choice of the committee adopted. Sometimes Irish ingenuity went the length of having one man put forward with a view to having him rejected, and of a second candidate being put forward as a substitute.

I don't remember presiding over more than one of these conventions, but it was a difficult convention, and I doubt that I could have carried it through if it had not been for the astuteness and promptitude of Mr. Healy. The candidate we were instructed to get selected if possible was Sir

Joseph M'Kenna—uncle, by the way, of the Reginald M'Kenna of our day. There was a strong local candidate whom we suspected of being of that factious spirit that would make him an uneasy companion in a Party where discipline was strictly enforced.

The deputation from Dublin was met at the railway-station by, among others, the Bishop of the diocese, who knew our man, and who was just as much opposed as anybody else to his selection. Our candidate had, however, a certain amount of support among the priests, and when the convention met, a priest got up and proposed, with every appearance of exuberant partisanship, the name of the man we did not want. I took the proposition in all seriousness, but later on Mr. Healy described it as a plant, with the purpose not of having the candidate chosen, but of having him withdrawn in favour of the candidate of the Party. This, of course, forced the hand of the local candidate, and he protested loudly at the close of the convention; but his protest was in vain, and I was able to get my man chosen, I think unanimously.

Parnell and Mr. Healy

It will be evident from these facts that this little committee in Dublin had the representation of Ireland entirely in its hands. Parnell, if he had taken the trouble—but he was a lazy man, and the lure of Brighton made any lengthened stay in Ireland extremely obnoxious to him—might have made a list of candidates of his own which he could easily have carried. He again and again alluded to this neglect of his opportunities when the tragic struggle came around his leadership. He was quite right in suggesting that with more trouble and more assistance he could have created a party which would have been so frankly

and unmistakably partisan where he was concerned that he would never have been rejected by a majority of his Party.

There was one occasion, however, on which Parnell did assert himself, and the difficulties which he encountered and overcame proved what he might have done if he had exercised more vigilance and played more for his own hand. There was one member of our party who was suspected by everybody; I will not mention his name, because I believe some of his relatives still survive. He belonged to that section of the party which had come into existence before the rise of Parnell—a section which, as I have already said, consisted mainly of men who had become members of Parliament in the hope of getting from the Government the well-paid positions that would lift them above the pennilessness and uncertainty of their financial fortunes.

Parnell asserts himself

This gentleman was never regarded as a thoroughly loyal member of his Party; but Irishmen are good-natured at bottom, and the knowledge of this man's somewhat forlorn position and the sense that he could not be really dangerous when we had a Party so large and for the most part so loyal, induced several of the Party to plead his cause. He had also a powerful ally in his wife, a most estimable and devoted woman, for whom everybody had sympathy. She had a somewhat large family, and of course she was anxious for their welfare as well as that of her husband. It was a lioness pleading for her cubs. She had seen every member of the committee whom she could reach, and had pledged some of them to the support of her husband. Thus it was that when the constituency this gentleman had represented for so many years came up

for discussion, member after member got up to plead this man's cause—among others, Mr. Edmund Dwyer Gray, a very important member of the Party, for he was the proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, the chief, and then the only, Nationalist daily in Dublin. He also was an extremely good-natured man, and he made a strong plea for the unhappy man whose fate was trembling in the balance.

Parnell listened to the discussion without uttering a word; but at last he spoke, and it was evident, under the restrained language and the cold delivery, that he was swept by one of those ruthless passions to which he occasionally gave way. "If you gentlemen", he went on in effect to say, "choose to give him a seat, that is your affair; but I am determined never to sit in the same Party as this gentleman."

It came as a surprise and shock to most of the members when this ruthless condemnation to beggary and obscurity of this old member was made by Parnell. It was known also that the man had a very strong position in the constituency because of his having been born in it, associated with it all his life, and with innumerable ties of party and acquaintanceship. It was known also that he was a very dexterous electioneerer, and that the contest would be difficult and perhaps ferocious. He himself used to tell with great glee how he won a meeting by exhibiting to an audience a piece of grass which he had plucked that morning from the grave of his father.

Parnell knew all this, but he knew something else that was not then present to the minds of his colleagues. He knew that this man had foreseen the enmity of Parnell, and had endeavoured to weaken Parnell by the revelation (in private, though not in public) of the relations between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea. Some of these sayings had been repeated to Parnell, and there arose in his mind evidently

the determination to stand by the woman whom he loved. He realized fully that if he went into this contest with such an opponent he would have to face all this man's inexhaustible resources of abuse, and that there might spring upon him that terrible danger of exposure under which he had lain for so many years. But such was the ferocious resolution of the man, so profound his love for Mrs. O'Shea, so strong his resolution to stand by her at all risks, that he determined, in spite of the violent antipathy thus expressed for the assailant of Mrs. O'Shea, to face the risk not merely of deluging vituperation, of fatal revelation, but also of mob violence. He even departed from his usual practice and went down to this constituency to make the fight in his own person. He won, as it turned out, though with a struggle quite as bitter as could have been expected.

I dwell for a few moments on this episode. It gives the key to many of the foolish, and indeed disastrous, things which Parnell did some years afterwards when his leadership and his life were at stake. It supplies the reason which drove Parnell into some of the insane actions which ultimately delivered him into the hands of his enemies. The defence of Mrs. O'Shea, shown to be so determined at this moment, was one of the factors that might well have been considered as most momentous in the struggle that came later.

Little did I or anybody else realize that, at the time when the destruction of Gladstone's chance of obtaining a majority at the Election seemed to be the best hope for Ireland, at that very moment Mrs. O'Shea was constantly being received by Mr. Gladstone's Chief Whip, and with him was constantly discussing a means of reconciliation—if not actually of co-operation—between Parnell and Gladstone.

It was also one of the vices of the situation that

Gladstone kept his intentions with regard to Irish self-government practically within his own bosom. If I and other Irishmen of the period had been more vigilant and perhaps less suspicious, we might have read between some of the utterances of Gladstone the foreshadowings of the great project that was already forming, if not formed, in his mind, of making an attempt to give Ireland self-government. But blind passion, I now think, rather obscured our vision. Besides, it looked as if Gladstone, in spite of the enlargement of the electorate through the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourers, would have an independent majority over the Tories and ourselves, and we thought our interest was that the two parties should be so evenly balanced that we should be the controlling factors that held both parties at their mercy.

Lord Carnarvon secretly meets Parnell

There was equal ambiguity in the attitude of the Tory Party. Lord Carnarvon had been sent to Ireland during the short Tory regime as Lord-Lieutenant, and he immediately proceeded to a series of actions, some of which I was able to exploit in my speeches as strong arguments for the support of the Tories and against the Liberals.

Among the many people convicted during the Spencer regime, of course by a packed jury, was a man named Bernard Kelly. The advent of Lord Carnarvon as Lord-Lieutenant was immediately followed by the release of this man, though his term of penal servitude had not yet expired. To make the episode more conspicuous, when the Lord-Lieutenant went on a visit to a town in Western Ireland the man who drove his car through the wilds was this very Bernard Kelly—an incident of which, of course, I made the most dramatic use.

The world was also startled by the news which leaked out, that Lord Carnarvon had had a secret meeting with Mr. Parnell; the mystery surrounding it was increased by the fact that, as it afterwards turned out, the meeting took place in practically an empty house in Grosvenor Square.

What actually took place between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell was never quite demonstrated. It was a fact, however, that Lord Salisbury knew of the intended visit and did not express disapproval; but it was impossible to tell what Lord Carnarvon was ready to promise or in what Lord Salisbury was implicated in approving.

In some of the constituencies this semi-alliance between the Tories and ourselves was indicated in ways that could not be misunderstood. One candidate, later to be an ardent and consistent supporter of the policy of Coercion on which the Tory Cabinet embarked not many months afterwards, put on one of his placards the words: "Vote for —— and no Coercion". Not altogether explicitly, but so far as they could go, the Tory Party promised not to renew Coercion. In addition, there were flirtations with the idea of extended local government in Ireland, which might very well lead both the English and the Irish electors to the view that a strong Tory Government, with the alliance of the Irish members, might propose a measure of self-government to Ireland, perhaps not as large and generous as would satisfy the Irish people and as Parnell could accept, but a long step on the road that would and must ultimately end in Home Rule.

One speech of Lord Salisbury especially was noteworthy. Speaking at Newport, Mon., in October 1885, he says—

"You will probably ask me, 'How far are you inclined to carry this question of local authority, and how far are you inclined to make it general; how far, for instance, are

you inclined to extend it to Ireland?' That is a very difficult question. I admit the first principle on which we have always gone has been to extend as far as we can to Ireland all the institutions that we have established in this country, but I fully recognize that, in the case of local institutions especially, there is one limiting consideration which, in the present state of Ireland, you cannot leave out of mind. The local authority there is more exposed to temptation, and has more of the facility for enabling the majority to be unjust to the minority than in the case when the authority derives its sanction and extends its jurisdiction over a wider area. That is one of the weaknesses of local authorities. In a large centre authority the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly or mistakes of one. In a local authority that correction to a large extent is wanting, and it would be impossible to leave out of sight in the extension of any such local authority to Ireland the fact that the population is on certain subjects deeply divided, and that it is the first duty of every Government in all matters of essential justice to protect the minority against the majority."

Lord Salisbury then referred to a speech by Mr. Parnell in which he (Parnell) referred in a marked way to the position of Austria and Hungary. From this Lord Salisbury drew the conclusion that some kind of new proposition—some notion of Imperial federation—was floating in Mr. Parnell's mind. Lord Salisbury, while in favour of Imperial federation, was careful to say that the idea was still "shapeless and unformed". But with respect to Ireland he felt bound to say that—

"I have never seen any plan or any suggestion to give me at present the slightest ground for anticipating that it is in that direction that we should find any satisfactory solution of the difficult Irish question. I wish it might be so, but I think I shall be holding out false expectations if I avow a belief which, at all events, we cannot as yet main-

tain. To maintain the integrity of the Empire must undoubtedly be our first policy with respect to Ireland."

The rest of Lord Salisbury's speech on Ireland dealt with the Crimes Act, which, he maintained, did not diminish outrages or prevent boycotting.

A Confusion of Parties

Such was the confusion in which this strange election was fought out; the result, on the whole, was fairly satisfactory. The Liberal Party came back with a majority of 333; the Tories with a minority of 251. The Irish had at last demonstrated their claim, denied for so many years, to represent the opinions of the Irish people, by winning 85 out of the 103 seats of the entire Irish representation.

It will be seen from what I have said that when we went to the election we did so in more or less avowed understanding between the Tory Government and ourselves; but we soon got warning that the Government had reconsidered the position and that, instead of any proposal by them either for the final settlement of the still open Land question or on the question of self-government, we could only expect a return by the Tory Government to the old policy of Coercion.

Lord Randolph Churchill was one of the first to avow this change of attitude. In that daring cynicism which was part of his character and his career, he said to Justin M'Carthy words to the effect that he had done his best for us (meaning the Irish Party) and had failed, and that now he was doing his best against us. Another indication of the change in the policy of the Government was the resignation of Lord Carnarvon and of the Chief Secretary, Sir William Hart-Dyke, and the substitution for the latter of Mr. W. H. Smith, already regarded as a safe man for a

difficult situation. For the moment Mr. Smith supplied the Tory Government with the excuse that until he had reported on the condition of affairs in Ireland they could not make a full statement of their policy.

Such was the state of confusion of parties in which the new House began its proceedings. It was marked, however, from the very start by the closing of the controversy with regard to Mr. Bradlaugh, which had distracted its proceedings for six years. Mr. Peel, the Speaker of the House of Commons, announced that he could not entertain any proposal to exclude Mr. Bradlaugh from his seat; and so there came this curious end in absolute quietness to all the fierce conflicts of so many years. Mr. Bradlaugh took the oath and his seat, and very soon was one of the most active and useful members of the House, with the respect of all the members for his abilities and assiduity and also the discovery in him, by his strong anti-Socialist attitude, that the devil of a few years before was not so black as he had been painted.

CHAPTER II

The fall of Gladstone's Government—Relations of Gladstone and Chamberlain—The introduction of the Home Rule Bill—Bright declares against—Liberals' Foreign Office meeting—Chamberlain's caucus—The Bill thrown out—Gladstone in the constituencies.

The Queen's Speech, January 21, 1886

THE Queen's Speech left no doubt that the policy of Coercion was to be definitely adopted by the Government; it also announced the refusal of the Government to make any attempt to interfere in the legislative union between Ireland and Great Britain. For some days after the meeting of Parliament both sides were more or less playing for position. Every attempt was made by his open Tory enemies and his enemies in his own Party to draw Mr. Gladstone into a specific declaration of what his intentions were with regard to Home Rule.

Mr. Gladstone declined to be drawn. In one of his speeches at this time he used a phrase that passed into history, in which, announcing his own intention to keep his counsel, he advised his followers "as an old Parliamentary hand to do the same". It was evident, however, from his speech that he had given up the possibility of continuing the government of Ireland on the old lines. For some time there was suspense as to whether the Liberal Opposition, who (with the Irish, of course) formed a majority in the House, should use their power and compel the resignation of the Government. At last, however, the Liberal Opposition agreed to support an amendment to the address which stood in the name of Mr. Jesse Collings,

and which advocated the policy of agricultural reform, which had come to be known as the policy of "three acres and a cow". On this amendment to the Queen's Speech 331 voted for it and 252 against it, thus giving a majority of 79 against the Government.

Some indication of coming trouble was given by the fact that no fewer than 18 Liberals, with Lord Hartington, Sir Henry James, Sir George Trevelyan, and Sir John Lubbock amongst them, voted with the Government; 76 abstained, including John Bright.

The Government immediately resigned, and Gladstone was at last in a position to form another administration, and start out on the perilous enterprise to which he was now committed of proposing the creation of an Irish Parliament.

Morley as Chief Secretary, February 2, 1886

It would be a waste of my space to go into the long story of political and personal intrigues which followed. Mr. Gladstone was able to make a strong Ministry; the appointment which created most attention and interest was that of Mr. John Morley to the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland. Mr. Morley had been known for years as a most outspoken advocate of Home Rule, and his appointment as the chief figure in the new government of Ireland of course proclaimed to the world that Home Rule would certainly be the proposal of Mr. Gladstone. For the moment he was able to get into his Cabinet two such doubtful supporters as Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan. They justified their acceptance of office on the ground that up to that moment all Mr. Gladstone had asked them to do was join him in an enquiry as to the lines on which the coming Irish measure was to be based.

Before long, however, this unnatural alliance came to an end, and one day Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan were seen no longer on the Treasury Bench, but on the seats below the gangway on the Liberal side. Negotiations, indeed, had been going on some time behind the scenes, in which Mr. Labouchere took a prominent part. Intrigue was the very soul of Mr. Labouchere's being, and he was never quite happy unless he was running from one camp to another in the endeavour to produce understanding and compromise. There could not have been a more unfortunate choice as negotiator. Under an appearance of extreme cunning, he was a very simple man; could not keep a secret for five minutes, blabbed first to one man and then to another the most sacred of confidences, and to a certain extent messed everything which he tried to improve.

I saw an extraordinary instance of how bitter the feeling was becoming between Mr. Gladstone and his former colleague. There was a reception at Queen Anne's Mansions by Mr. Woodall, a small member of the new administration, chiefly remarkable for his bestowal—and his own strong enjoyment—of sumptuous dinners, with an especially abundant supply of champagne. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain were among his guests, and part of the entertainment was an exhibition by a French conjurer of some acts of legerdemain. Mr. Gladstone, whom everybody present was watching, entered into the spirit of the evening with almost childlike enjoyment, and when challenged by the conjurer had to avow his inability to see through his tricks. But Mr. Chamberlain was observed to be moving about feverishly and rapidly, and it was reported that he had summed up the hopeless situation of Mr. Gladstone in terms of familiar rather than courtly language, which included the application to Mr. Gladstone

of what Johnson calls a "term of endearment amongst sailors".

I have never been able to understand why Mr. Chamberlain took this line. As I have already said, he was the first man of any serious importance who had, as far back as 1874, in his candidature at Sheffield, avowed his sympathy with Home Rule. How far his feelings were personal it is not for me to say. Parnell undoubtedly had deeply offended him by putting his veto on a tour which he and Sir Charles Dilke had suggested in Ireland, and Parnell had also peremptorily forbidden Mr. Healy to accept an invitation to a meeting with Chamberlain and Dilke. I assume Parnell's reasons were that he had already made up his mind that the one man on whom he could rely for the ability to carry Home Rule was Gladstone, and that he already regarded Chamberlain as an enemy both of Gladstone and of Home Rule.

Gladstone and Joseph Chamberlain, 1886

It has been urged that Mr. Gladstone was lacking in consideration for Mr. Chamberlain, and had further estranged that already somewhat restless and dissatisfied follower by not offering to him any great position in the new Government. It certainly must be admitted (Gladstone admitted it himself to me) that up to this time he had seriously underrated the Parliamentary abilities of Chamberlain. Everybody underrated him—I have already revealed the fact that during the years he held office in 1880 to 1885, Mr. Chamberlain had not shown any promise of that great Parliamentary position he afterwards attained; except in his speech in reply to Lord Randolph Churchill's attack on the Aston riots, he had never made a speech that produced any strong impression on the House.

Once, in a long conversation I had with him at Hawarden, Mr. Gladstone declared that the struggle for Home Rule had brought the Parliamentary abilities of two men into greater prominence than they had ever before attained; one of them was Mr. Goschen, the other, and still more conspicuously, Mr. Chamberlain.

I am unable also to reconcile Mr. Chamberlain's action in the matter, for the reason that over and over again he involved himself in absolutely contradictory positions with regard to Home Rule. I cannot sum up better these contradictions than in Mr. Gladstone's description of them in a speech he made just before the House went to the division on his Home Rule Bill—

"Now, sir, what is before us? What is before us in the event of the rejection of this Bill? What alternatives have been proposed? Here I must for a moment comment on the fertile imagination of my right hon. friend (Mr. Chamberlain) the Member for West Birmingham. He has proposed alternatives, and plenty of them. My right hon. friend says that a Dissolution has no terrors for him. I do not wonder at it. I do not see how a Dissolution can have any terrors for him. He has trimmed his vessel and has touched his rudder in such a masterly way that in whichever direction the winds of Heaven may blow they must fill his sails. Let me illustrate my meaning. I will suppose different cases. Supposing at the election—I mean that an election is a thing like Christmas, it is always coming—supposing that at an election public opinion should be very strong in favour of the Bill. My right hon. friend would then be perfectly prepared to meet that public opinion, and tell it—'I declared strongly that I adopted the principle of the Bill'. On the other hand, if public opinion was very adverse to the Bill, my right hon. friend, again, is in complete armour, because he says—'Yes, I voted against the Bill'. Supposing, again, that public opinion is in favour of a very large plan for Ireland. My right hon. friend is perfectly provided for that

case also. The Government plan was not large enough for him, and he proposed in his speech on the introduction of the Bill that we should have a measure on the basis of federation, which goes beyond this Bill. Lastly—and now I have very nearly boxed the compass—supposing that public opinion should take quite a different turn, and instead of wanting very large measures for Ireland should demand very small measures for Ireland, still the resources of my right hon. friend are not exhausted, because then he is able to point out that the last of his plans was four Provincial Councils controlled from London. Under other circumstances I should, perhaps, have been tempted to ask the secret of my right hon. friend's recipe; as it is, I am afraid I am too old to learn it. But I do not wonder that a Dissolution has no terrors for him, because he is prepared in such a way and with such a series of expedients to meet all the possible contingencies of the case."

Gladstone's Home Rule Secret

The secret of the proposals of Mr. Gladstone was well kept. There had been consultations between him and Parnell, and practically all the proposals were submitted for Parnell's approval. It was on the question of finance, curiously enough, that most of the difficulties arose; Gladstone said to Parnell that, though on other matters he might be open to representations, he would be found on finance to be a hard-fisted John Bull. On the other hand, Parnell was equally stubborn and perhaps even more hard-fisted than Gladstone on this question; though he played ducks and drakes with his own finances, and left a bankrupt estate and a penniless widow, he was in all public finance the most hard-fisted of men. He took the cheapest of dinners in the House of Commons, and he never smoked an expensive cigar. Morley puts it very well in this passage—

"To the last Parnell held out that the just proportion

of Irish contribution to the Imperial Fund was not one-fourteenth or one-fifteenth, but a twentieth or twenty-first part. He insisted all the more strongly on his own more liberal fraction, as a partial compensation for their surrender of fiscal liberty and the right to impose customs duties. Even an hour or two before the Bill was actually to be unfolded in the House, he hurried to the Irish Office, in what was for him rather an excited state, to make one more appeal to me for his fraction. It is not at all improbable that if the Bill had gone forward into Committee, it would have been at the eleventh hour rejected by the Irish on this department of it, and then all would have been at an end."

I saw Parnell the day before the Bill was introduced—together with four or five of my colleagues. Parnell was, naturally, very cautious, but he had such perfect confidence in us that he gave us some of the outlines of the Bill—of course on the strict understanding that we should keep them secret. Whatever charges might be made against the Irish Party of omission and commission, they were clear of any base betrayal of secrets throughout their whole history. I feel that, when history has told the whole story, it will be found that there never was in legislature a party of more honourable or disinterested men than among the followers of Parnell. Even after Parnell's death, and when Parliament was distracted by all the hideous and partisan considerations that entered into faction fights, I knew of only one instance where an Irish member did what I considered a dirty act, in giving to a newspaper for a hundred pounds a premature copy of the report of a Parliamentary committee. Perhaps it might also not be an irrelevance to point out the difference between these modern representatives, so fervidly assailed in the days of their struggle, and those members of the old Irish Parliament of 1800 who, for titles or money, sold the liberties of their country and destroyed the old Parliament, and prepared England and

Ireland for all the evils that ensued from that act of suicidal betrayal. I quote from Morley's *Recollections*—

"When the Bill was practically settled, he (Parnell) asked if he might have a draft of the main provisions for communication to half a dozen of his confidential colleagues. After some demur, the Irish Secretary consented, warning him of the damaging consequences of any premature divulgation. The draft was duly returned, and not a word leaked out. Some time afterwards Mr. Parnell recalled the incident to me. 'Three of the men to whom I showed the draft were newspaper men, and they were poor men, and any newspaper would have given them a thousand pounds for it. No very wonderful virtue, you may say. But how many of your House of Commons would believe it?' "

Gladstone's First Home Rule Bill, April 8, 1886

However, there it was. The spectacle which the House presented on April 8, 1886, when Mr. Gladstone was to produce his scheme, was the most remarkable, perhaps, in the whole history of Parliament. There was, of course, the usual and fierce competition for seats; some of the Irish members especially interested in the great day came, I believe, as early as midnight on the previous day. One Irish member, to while away the time, took a bicycle, which was kept on the Terrace by the then head of the Refreshment Department, and began to ride up and down the Terrace. He fell, and badly injured his head, and a medical colleague had to bind up his wounds; but he remained in the House.

When Gladstone was about to rise, a very singular and I think unparalleled incident took place. Among the members of the House was a very stout and somewhat bellicose alderman of the City of London, who had been Lord Mayor. His name was Fowler; he was known privately by

another word which is a transmutation of the letters of his own name, and was due to certain free and easy habits—I dare not more particularly describe it. He was a man of initiative and courage, and to him it occurred to meet the situation by a bold expedient. He went out of the House of Commons, and came back with a chair and seated himself on the floor of the House in the space between the benches. On both sides the example was followed with infectious enthusiasm, with the result that when Gladstone got up he found not the usual space in front of him which would enable him to breathe and speak with freedom, but the floor packed with this addition to his audience on the crowded chairs.

He did not show it, but I fancy it must have added a little to the many embarrassments of a speech so great, and with such complications and antagonisms to face, and such vast amount of detail to set forth. The speech lasted for nearly three and a half hours. I discussed the character of it with Mr. Balfour, then leader of the Opposition, in the course of the evening. He expressed the opinion that it was not one of Gladstone's greatest efforts, and I agreed with that opinion. The truth is, it was too packed with details. I also added that I thought, considering the circumstances, the speech was very free from anything like provocativeness. "Oh, it was judicious, I admit," was the reply of Mr. Balfour.

The history is now too ancient and too complicated for me to go through all the weeks which followed, between the introduction and the second reading of the Bill. Never was there such a busy period of active and very often of mean intrigue. Men of infinitesimal importance became momentous in view of the uncertainty of the numbers on the coming division. There were, as was inevitable in dealing with such characters, various attitudes

according to the probabilities of the fateful result. Members noted for their self-seeking would be hailed at four o'clock in the afternoon as friends of the Bill; at ten o'clock on the same night as enemies. The passions which burst out in political opinion were transferred even to social activities. Great aristocrats like the Duke of Westminster took down the portrait of Gladstone by Millais. Gladstone, writing to Lord Granville, said he was seriously alarmed about the Queen's Birthday dinner. "Hardly any Peers of the higher rank will be available, and not many of the lower." The Duke of Argyll, one of Gladstone's oldest friends, refused the invitation. The Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward, had to refuse, though he allowed his son, Prince Albert Victor, to be present. The scission extended to the clubs. "At some of the political clubs", writes Morley, "it rained blackballs."

There were only two welcome events during this period of stress and strain. The great Liberal Organization, of which Chamberlain himself and Mr. Schnadhorst were the leaders, went decidedly for Gladstone; also Lord Salisbury helped the Irish cause by one of those madly indiscreet speeches in which he occasionally indulged, comparing the Irish to Hottentots.

Bright declares against the Bill

One of the most perplexing and distressing problems which Gladstone had to face was the attitude of Mr. Bright. It was strange indeed that a man who had in so many dark hours advocated the cause of Ireland should now show disapproval. There were "long and weighty" interviews between him and Gladstone. I just caught sight of them once speaking behind the Speaker's chair —that invisible and tranquil asylum, hidden from the

majority of the House, where so many of the private deals between opposing politicians have been arranged. But Bright, though he had not yet committed himself, was opposed to Mr. Gladstone's Bill. In a letter to Gladstone he gave his real reason—I think rather an insufficient if not a mean reason. He refused, he said, to consign the Irish population, "including Ulster and all her Protestant families, to what there is of justice and wisdom in the Irish Party now sitting in the Parliament in Westminster". As to the danger to the Protestant families, there never was a more fantastic idea, and the proofs of it lay before the eyes of Mr. Bright, because Parnell, the omnipotent Leader of the Irish Party in Parliament at the moment, was a Protestant, and a sturdy one too, and there were several other Protestants in the Party as ardent Home Rulers as any of the Catholics. There was this amount of truth in what Bright said, that it was our attacks—some very imprudent, including that one by myself which I have ever since regretted, and an even more bitter attack by Mr. Sexton—that soured the temper of Mr. Bright.

Gladstone's great and elaborate scheme had, like all great measures dealing with many subjects, very vulnerable points. The provision of the Bill which excluded from the Imperial Parliament all Irish members might have been supposed to be a relief to a House which had groaned and sworn under the domination of the little obstructive group of Irish members for several years. (I may incidentally remark that this exclusion of the Irish members, except those from Ulster, has since been carried out with universal consent.) There was also fierce onslaught on the Land Purchase Bill, with which Gladstone had accompanied the Home Rule proposals. Nothing apparently ought to have been more welcome and nothing more palpably just than such a measure. Without this proposal

the property of Irish landlords would have been exposed to the will of a Parliament in Dublin in which the representatives of the oppressed and rack-rented tenantry would have been supreme, and it was difficult to believe that a Parliament so constituted could do justice to their old enemies.

And here there came an opportunity of saving the situation which I still regret was not taken. Even Chamberlain, and perhaps Bright, might have been ready to accept a proposal which began to be suggested, which was that the second reading of the Bill should be put to the House with the understanding that it would not be proceeded with to any of its further stages until an autumn session; which brings me to a slight, brief allusion. I made a speech on the Bill—it was the worst speech I ever delivered in the House. In the first place, it was inordinately long—two hours—and I had embarrassed myself with proof sheets of what I was going to say, so that, as by a python, I was encircled and embarrassed by these voluminous strips of proof; and, though the House listened to me—as they did to everybody in these terribly anxious times—I felt I had made a fool of myself.

But I did make one suggestion which I still think pointed out a way of escape. I knew the House of Commons as Parnell did not know it; I knew the English people as Parnell did not know them. I made, then, a proposal as a means of escape from the dilemma in which certain so-called Radicals and Liberals found themselves as to the course they should take on the second reading of the Government of Ireland Bill.

My suggestion was that the House of Commons should first of all affirm the principle of the Bill and later on discuss its details, or the details of an alternative measure. I argued strongly that the House should vote on what Mr.

Gladstone had described as the fundamental principle of the Bill, and on that only. Mr. Gladstone described the Bill as one for "the establishment by the authority of Parliament of a Legislative body, sitting in Dublin, for the conduct of both legislation and administration under the conditions which may be described by the Act defining Irish, as distinct from Imperial, affairs".

I expressed my surprise and that of many others at the forms which criticism of the measure had taken. The Bill, I pointed out, was objected to on the second reading stage, not so much because of its central principle, as because of its details. That, I said, was an unusual course to take in regard to any Bill. I urged the House to enact the principle of the Bill, and to discuss details at a later stage; *e.g.* in the following autumn.

Gladstone's Flash of Impatience

I go back to one of the many episodes which occurred during the prolonged debates. Mr. Gladstone called a meeting of his supporters at the Foreign Office, to see if any compromise could be made between him and them. Just as Gladstone was about to cross to the Foreign Office, Morley produced a letter which had been written on the previous afternoon to him by Parnell. In this letter Parnell said—

"You of course are the best judge of what the result may be in England, but if it be permitted me to express an opinion, I should say that withdrawal could scarcely fail to give great encouragement to those whom it cannot conciliate, to depress and discourage those who are now the strongest fighters for the measure, to produce doubt and wonder in the country and to cool enthusiasm; and finally, when the same Bill is produced again in the autumn, to disappoint and cause reaction amongst those

who may have been temporarily disarmed by withdrawal, and to make them at once more hostile and less easy to appease."

Mr. Morley continues the narration in these words—

"For a single instant—the only occasion that I can recall during all these severe weeks—his (Gladstone's) patience broke. The recovery was as rapid as the flash, for he knew the duty of the lieutenant of the watch to report the signs of rock and shoal. He was quite as conscious of all that was urged in Mr. Parnell's letter as was its writer, but perception of risks on one side did not overcome risks on the other. The same evening they met for a second time.

"*May 27.*—Mr. Gladstone and Parnell had a conversation in my room. Parnell courteous enough, but depressed and gloomy. Mr. Gladstone worn and fagged. . . . When he was gone, Parnell repeated moodily that he might not be able to vote for the second reading, if it were understood that after the second reading the Bill was to be withdrawn. 'Very well,' said I, 'that will of course destroy the Government and the policy; but be that as it may, the Cabinet, I am positive, won't change their line.' "

I had taken the trouble to send a copy of what I proposed to say, to Mr. Gladstone, and had invited his opinion on the wisdom of the passage, and of my speaking it. Gladstone sent me a reply which amounted to the statement that I might say it, but he could not commit himself to it. When I sat down there could be no doubt about Parnell's disapproval of my language. He said: "I want *this* Bill". Then I said in reply that we would soon be face to face with the General Election. "I view the General Election", replied Parnell, "with great composure."

The General Election did not justify this composure, for, as will be seen, the Bill and the policy of Gladstone were defeated by an overwhelming majority of 110. Parnell himself went to several meetings; he got a rapturous reception, but there was not a single con-

stituency at which he spoke that did not go against us. As this passage seems critical of the judgment of Parnell, I should immediately add that one of the characteristics of this remarkable man was great patience. "My colleagues", he said once, "want to run to a point. They ought to know that they could get there quite as easily by walking." It was also perhaps part of that domineering and tenacious temperament that even in the dark hours he was not despondent, that he could stretch his mind across years of waiting in patience, and in certainty that he ultimately would win. Anyhow, he and I took different sides and formed different opinions at this fateful moment. Whether he or I was wrong other events were ultimately to decide.

Liberals' Foreign Office Meeting, May 27, 1886

Meanwhile there was a moment when the fates seemed to be fighting on the side of Gladstone and the Bill. At the Foreign Office he made a statement which seemed to satisfy a number of his opponents and of his own Party. "In the course of the evening", writes Morley, "a score of the waverers were found to have been satisfied, and were struck off the dissentient lists. But", goes on Mr. Morley, "the relief did not last for many hours." Sir Michael Hicks-Beach compelled, by a motion for adjournment, the immediate discussion of Gladstone's speech at the Foreign Office, and above all he criticized the suggestion that the second reading of the Bill should be withdrawn or postponed.

Though he preserved his ordinary calm, Gladstone was very much stung, and he replied rather hotly, and then going on to discuss what he had actually undertaken he put all the fat in the fire. Hicks-Beach, he said, had announced that the Government had undertaken "to re-

model the Bill", and then Gladstone gave way to a burst of passion. I quote again from Mr. Morley.

" 'That happy word,' he said, 'as applied to the structure of the Bill, is a pure invention.' Lord Randolph interjected that the word used was not 'remodelled' but 'reconstructed'. 'Does the noble lord dare to say', asked the Minister, 'that it was used in respect of the Bill?' 'Yes,' said the noble lord. 'Never, never,' cried the Minister, with a vehemence that shook the hearts of doubting followers; 'it was used with respect to one particular clause, and one particular point of the Bill, namely so much of it as touches the future relation of the representatives of Ireland to the Imperial Parliament.' "

Before the exciting episode was over, it was stated definitely that if the Bill were read a second time, Ministers would advise a prorogation and re-introduce the Bill with amendments. This apparent withdrawal by Gladstone—far more apparent than real—of the concessions by which he had won the waverers in the Foreign Office meetings, was disastrous. I was astounded to hear Mr. William Saunders, a lifelong Home Ruler, but a bit of a crank, speak to me with anger of what Gladstone had just done, and practically announce that all his readiness to support the Bill had disappeared.

Another nail in the coffin of the Bill was struck at a meeting in a committee-room in the House of Commons, which Mr. Chamberlain had called and over which he presided. There were fifty-five members present. The decision, which was in the balance for some time, was finally precipitated by a letter from Bright, who was not present. This letter announced that he himself would vote against the Bill. "This letter", says Morley, "was afterwards described as the death-warrant of the Bill and of the Administration." I have heard that when Mr. Bright was told of the result as he sat in the Reform Club, he was very dis-

turbed on learning of the decisive effect of his letter. The letter was not published at the time; I do not know that it has ever been published, and challenges to publish it were ignored by Mr. Chamberlain. It had done its work.

Home Rule Bill defeated, June 7, 1886

It was in this state of uncertainty that we approached the fateful division. Mr. Gladstone wound up the debate on his side in one of the finest orations he ever delivered—far finer than that with which he had introduced the Bill.

"He was almost as white", writes Morley, "as the flower in his coat, but the splendid compass, the flexibility, the moving charm and power of his voice, were never more wonderful. The construction of the speech was a masterpiece, the temper of it unbroken, its freedom from taunt and bitterness and small personality incomparable. Even if Mr. Gladstone had been in the prime of his days, instead of a man of seventy-six years all struck; even if he had been at his ease for the last four months, instead of labouring with indomitable toil at the two Bills, bearing all the multifarious burdens of the head of a Government, and all the weight of the business of the leader of the House, undergoing all the hourly strain and contention of a political situation of unprecedented difficulty—much of the contention being of that peculiarly trying and painful sort which means the parting of colleagues and friends—his closing speech would still have been a surprising effort of free, argumentative, and fervid appeal."

There were various and contradictory speculations as to what the result of the Bill would be, and its fate had been largely decided by the already almost complete understanding that Liberals who voted against the Bill would not have a Tory opponent in the coming election.

The numbers then were announced; there were 343 against the Bill, amongst whom were 93 Liberals, and 313

for it—a majority of 30 against the Bill. The House of Commons did not lose that spirit of banter and good humour which always breaks out in even its most solemn moments. The tellers against the Bill were Mr. Brand and Mr. Caine, both Liberals. "The brand of Cain," somebody shouted out, and was rewarded with immense and frenzied cheers. I stood up and called for three cheers for the Grand Old Man, in the hope of restoring courage in the midst of this calamity. Mr. William O'Brien said that it was tactless and tasteless—perhaps it was. After some discussion the proposal of Gladstone, to have a Dissolution and a General Election, was adopted by his Cabinet, and all parties prepared for the General Election.

A few days afterwards Gladstone began his renewed campaign in favour of his policy. To judge by first appearances, never had he exercised so supreme a mastery over the passions and affections of the masses of the people. At Edinburgh, at Glasgow, at Manchester the streets were filled for miles—five miles in the case of Manchester—with crowds that almost deafened and exhausted him. "I find", he said himself, "a display of enthusiasm far beyond all former measure." It was an additional burden upon him that all this speaking had to be done in a June of tropical heat and in halls crowded to suffocation. At Manchester, where the arrangements were not according to his taste, for a moment he seemed to break down. Some of his friends round him heard a murmur, "I must do it", and he went on and made his speech.

Gladstone in the Constituencies, June 1886

And then he came to Liverpool. As one of the members for that city I was present, and, indeed, in a conspicuous place on the platform. That meeting stands out amid my

crowded memories as one of the most remarkable I was ever at. The hall was inconveniently crowded. One enterprising gentleman sat on something like a timber projection, on which he seemed a lonely and somewhat ridiculous figure, and of course fastened upon himself the eyes of all the audience. He looked a somewhat self-complacent gentleman, but there came an incident in the course of the meeting which brought blushes even to his hardened cheek: for Mr. Gladstone, in illustrating some point, spoke as though he were levelling a gun at the prominent gentleman. The incident, of course, excited much laughter. There was also on the platform on this day one of the greatest and most remarkable figures of American life, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.

Gladstone was at his best in his speech—playful, argumentative, solemn; all these moods were conveyed in a voice that, in spite of the terrible strain upon it, seemed as fresh as ever. But there were very palpable evidences of the strain which the exertions of previous days and the stifling heat of the room on the hot June day were making upon him. He began the address wearing one of those very spacious and very erect collars which the genius of the caricaturists has made familiar to the world. By the time the speech was ended the collar had entirely changed its appearance, and from being stiff and upright became moist and flat. There was even more palpable evidence of the strain upon him if you looked at the back of his black coat: it was just as if he had stood out in the open under a heavy shower of rain.

Then he went into the streets and received the same rapturous reception. It was not the first occasion on which I saw proof that the appearance of Gladstone—with his magnificent face, his splendid eyes, the expression at once so benignant as well as so resolute, his broad shoulders,

and the sense of vigour and resolution, not weakened by 76 years of life—had almost the effect of the trailing of a miraculous saint among masses of idolaters. So strongly did I feel the effect of this inspiring presence of Gladstone that I pressed him more than once to pay a visit to London. He had to own himself exhausted, but I still think that if he could have gone in a similar procession to the constituencies of the East End of London we should have won a number of seats.

Everybody knows the disastrous result of the election. The Liberals were reduced from 235 to 196; the Tories rose from 251 to 316; the dissentient Liberals fell to 74; our Party remained at its old strength. This meant that the opponents of the Irish policy of the Government were 390 as against 280 in its favour, or a Unionist majority of 110. If the voting be examined, the result is not quite the same. In the total poll the Liberals had 1,344,000 votes, the Liberal Unionists 397,000 and the Tories 1,041,000. Thus, as Morley puts it, in the contested constituencies the Liberal Home Rulers were only 76,000 behind the forces of the Tories and the dissentient Liberals combined. Parnell, with that strange obtuseness which was part of his tenacious character and of his ignorance of English life, pressed Gladstone to meet the Parliament in spite of the defeat, but of course Gladstone could not consent to so obviously foolish and futile a course.

Gladstone meantime took up the burden, and for six long years he never relaxed his advocacy of the Home Rule cause. He went for a while on vacation, selecting the home of Dr. Döllinger, then in revolt against the doctrine of infallibility which had been passed by the Council at Rome. Gladstone found time to write a stirring article in the *Nineteenth Century* in reply to the gloomy pessimism of Tennyson's second edition of "Locksley Hall".

CHAPTER III

The new Party—Some personalities—Swift MacNeill—The invincible heckler—Cheering the Boers—William Martin Murphy—Politics and tramways—The dictator of Dublin—Sam Young—Justin M'Carthy.

THE new Party which crowded the benches of the House of Commons, and which gave Parnell an unquestioned superiority as the representative of Ireland, was of course a tremendous new factor, and from that time forward till his untimely end made Parnell to a large extent the dictator of the political life of England, especially when the Liberals were in office. The big majority which the Conservatives gained in the disastrous election of 1886 for a time checked Parnell's power in the House of Commons, but it never touched his omnipotence in Ireland, and if it had not been for the divorce case Parnell probably would have been able to instal in office a Liberal and Home Rule Party after the election of 1892. It will be seen later how this almost perfect certainty was destroyed by the downfall of Parnell.

Amid the big ruck of the Irish Party—though mostly silent, shabbily-dressed, and poor men whose contributions to the Party mainly consisted in their constant attendance at the House of Commons and, therefore, in the division lobbies—there were several outstanding figures, and I first give a sketch of one of the remarkable eccentricities of the House: Swift MacNeill.

Portrait of Swift MacNeill

Swift MacNeill was the delight and scoff of the House of Commons, the torture and the darling of his colleagues;

ever active, and nearly always futile; indefatigable, industrious, and yet never reaching anything he wanted to attain. He was a man of nude self-revelation, even when he had to tell of things against himself. He was a very plain—it would not be an exaggeration to say, a very ugly—man, with irregular features and prominent teeth. Red hair, turned grey in later life, fringed his face, so that ill-natured people applied to him a nickname from the Zoological Gardens; and brutal opponents sometimes repeated the odious epithet, which good-natured people hesitated to whisper in private. One caricaturist, who hated him and his politics, once put the idea into a cartoon; and there was an ugly scene in the Lobby when poor MacNeill, stung beyond endurance, hustled this enemy to express his resentment. And thus it was that he would suddenly startle and rather embarrass you by first telling you that his father and his mother had both been handsome, and how came it that he was so plain? I am bound to add, to complete the picture of the man, that he would on other occasions entertain you with mysterious whispers of romantic love bestowed by entrancing beauty on his unmitigated ugliness; and there was one lady in particular who figured in these stories, to whom was dedicated the romantic attachment for many years of an illustrious figure in English literature. But there was never any suggestion of more than pure platonism in these stories; though he was a good Protestant, poor Swift had some of the innocence of a convent-bred girl or an ascetic monk.

Another of the confessions he would thrust on his intimates was the illustriousness of his birth. Perhaps there was even an innocent suggestion that there was a certain condescension in one of his high birth joining the plebeian ranks of the Irish popular party to which he belonged. The claim as to high birth, in spite of the ridicu-

lousness of the way in which it was put forward, was quite well founded, for he belonged, indirectly at least, to families so illustrious as those of Speaker Lenthall and Dean Swift. John Gordon Swift MacNeill came from the manse on both sides; his father was a highly respected Protestant clergyman in Dublin, and his mother the daughter of a clergyman who had been a lieutenant in the Dragoon Guards. Swift remained true to the Church of his parents to the day of his death; but they never shared his political views, and it must have been something of a grief to them to see their son in the ranks of men the majority of whom they feared as rebels and perhaps despised as Papists.

MacNeill was a student, in succession, of Trinity College, in his native city, and of Christ Church, Oxford, and in both he carried off a fair number of prizes. Then he was admitted to the Bar, and for a while he had to choose between the two paths which presented themselves to the members of the legal profession in the 'seventies and 'eighties—the path of abstention from politics altogether, with professional interests only, and adhesion, silent or open, to Unionist politics; or the other path of popular representation, with the abandonment of all official hopes. Swift more than once indicated that he had had some regrets that he had not adopted the safer and more remunerative party path; but once he had taken up the popular side he gave it his faithful and his very effective assistance for many years. He never uttered a cry of regret until the day when the Niagara tide of Sinn Feinism drove him and so many others of the old Constitutional party from all share of the political life of Ireland. Then, for the first and only time in his life, he said something that was not kindly, for he put down his exclusion to his religion—which really had nothing to do with it—and not to another

and a new tide in the varied and tempestuous seas of Irish political life.

M.P. for South Donegal, 1887–1918

Parnell was always ready and even anxious to recruit to his Party men of the Protestant faith who had intellectual distinction; and when it was known that Swift was ready to become a candidate for admission to the Parnell Party there was not the least difficulty in getting him a seat. The constituency which elected Swift was South Donegal, one of the Catholic counties of Ulster, more Catholic almost than any county in the South. He sat for that constituency from 1887 till 1918.

Restless, well informed, steeped in constitutional law and all the history and traditions of Parliament, full of vanity so simple and so naked as to be attractive, and very much absorbed in himself, Swift soon became a prominent, often a noisy, sometimes an effective member of the House of Commons. He was always on the look-out for small things that might be turned into big; and very often he failed, except to create resentment, but very often he succeeded. He was never quiet; that nervous, excitable frame of his, that bubbling temper that sent words so frequently and swiftly to his lips, a certain boisterousness of humour, never left him still. He was so restless, indeed, as to be sometimes a torture to his friends and a scandal to the House. I used to say to him that to be seated by his side was like sitting on one of the early motor-cars during the agonizing minutes of its internal groanings and shakings before it was able to get up the power to start: a reproach which Swift would take with his great good humour.

It would require a book almost to recount the various

episodes in which he played the chief part. There was scarcely a sitting of the House at which he was present when you did not expect to see him enter with several books under his arm and a piece of manuscript in his hand, prepared to ask an awkward question, to make a motion, to harry the Government of the day, or any particular person or group against which he felt his wrath arise. And he could not be kept down. The House would laugh at him, shout at him, howl at him, sometimes even insult him; but Swift went on in his tenacious way. Often in the end, by his sheer importunity, and sometimes after years, he attained his purpose; and some of the fruits of his work, though he will not perhaps be remembered as the pioneer, will live for ever after him.

It was he, for instance, who created the rule that a member of the Cabinet could not remain a director of a public company—a rule which is almost inflexible, except in very rare instances where the exception can be justified by family ties or great private rights. It was Swift who finally abolished flogging in the Navy. In 1892 he even had the privilege of defeating a Government on the disallowance of the vote of the directors of the Mombasa Railway. And in one of his last sessions in Parliament he kept attacking the retention of the Princes and Sovereigns of our alien enemies still in the list of our Peers and the ranks of our great Orders until he compelled legislation which finally removed their names.

He had immense reading and a prodigious memory. Professor of Law for many years, he knew every precedent, every event of Parliamentary life. Thus, in spite of his foolishness of speech, of manner, and even of appearance, the House recognized his learning, and often great leaders like Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith paid graceful homage to his legal ability. His knowledge and memory of

the anecdotal side of political life was weirdly ample and available. He had the Irish weakness for high lineage; and there was not a story in the lives of the great families of England or Ireland that he could not tell. Looking across at some apparently commonplace and not specially aristocratic-looking Member of the House of Commons, Swift would suddenly tell you some tale that pointed to the man as one of illustrious and legendary interest. There was a remarkable book in this man's library, a historic cup in another's; this man's family had the shirt in which King Charles died; that other, one of the gowns of Mary Stuart, and so on.

He could tell you at the same time all the serious things of Parliamentary life: the Act that did this, the Act that did that, the ruling of this Speaker in the eighteenth century, of the other in the nineteenth; and then, if that did not satisfy you, he would pour forth a long catalogue of the hours at which earlier Parliaments used to meet, or he would give you the inner history of the quarrel between Fox and Burke or between Grattan and Castlereagh.

Cheering the Boers

One scene in the House at the time of the South African War became historic, and it created for many years afterwards a great deal of prejudice against both himself and, even more, against his Party. It was really terrible, and for a while shook all England with a very natural rage: for it represented their Irish fellow-citizens as rejoicing at the misfortune of a brave man and the defeat of British arms—at the time when the country was suffering from the peril and even more from the humiliation of that defeat at the hands of a small and insignificant foe.

The War Secretary had to announce on that fateful evening that Lord Methuen had been defeated, had been wounded, and had been captured. For many months MacNeill had carried on a violent campaign against Lord Methuen, not for any personal reason, but because he thought he had been an unsuccessful leader, kept in position by his influences. This is the version of what immediately followed this announcement, as MacNeill gave it to me afterwards; I was not present at the scene. When this announcement was made, MacNeill gave a loud gasp. While he was in this position of shock and surprise he heard a rancorous cheer from one of his comrades—I forbear to give the name—and then impulsively joined in the cheer; three or four other members followed the example, the sixty to seventy Irish members present abstained, and John Dillon, when I came down to the House, told me his arm was black and blue from digging it into MacNeill's ribs to try and keep him quiet.

The news of the incident passed like wildfire through the country; Lord Rosebery, speaking that night at Liverpool, and already in revolt against Home Rule and the Home Rulers, denounced it promptly. I remember the sickening sensation I had when, walking down to the House all innocent of what had occurred, I saw the big placards of the evening papers announcing the incident.

My friends and myself had to suffer for this great breach of good feeling, as well as good sense, for months, perhaps for years; but we had to suffer in silence: the iron law which prevents men from repudiating a colleague sealed our lips. MacNeill was half-frightened and half-delighted by the clamour he raised. He professed to be in fear of his life from outraged Englishmen; but, on the other hand, he received innumerable invitations to address pro-Boer meetings, and, as he put it, he was received

by his countrymen as "a young Robert Emmet"—the Irish patriot who was executed at the beginning of the nineteenth century for an unsuccessful rebellion.

However, nobody in the House of Commons ever resented anything MacNeill did for very long; everybody knew his irresponsibility and his kind-heartedness. He would assail a man fiercely, and a few minutes afterwards you would hear him address the same man as "My dear fellow", and excuse himself for having been unkind. For poor MacNeill, though he was fierce in the denunciation of what he thought cruel or wrong, was an extraordinarily kind-hearted man. There were two things which brought this home to you—one was his kindness to animals; he had cats and dogs in abundance, and once he declared to me quite solemnly that he nearly went mad when one of his cats died. The other manifestation of his kindness was his intense family affection. He adored his parents; he adored his sister, who, like himself, had remained unmarried and kept house for him. Once he told me, when he heard that his father was ill, he had to take a train to Holyhead—though he knew he could not get through to Dublin till the next day—just that he might feel himself nearer to the parent he loved so well. Every year his sister made a short visit to London. You could always know when she was coming, for there reappeared a frock-coat of many years' wear, and for days you saw her on the Terrace or in the dining-rooms with him. He was fussily attentive to her, as though she were a young maid he was about to marry.

He was fortunate in escaping in his later years the penury in which most Irish politicians end their days. The National University, though it is governed by Catholics and nearly all its pupils are Catholic, shows an admirable freedom from religious bigotry in a country

where religious feeling runs high, by choosing its Professors without regard to their religious opinion: and MacNeill, though a Protestant, held not only a professorship but also some small offices, such as secretary of the Convocation and other things; and his income, though modest, was sufficient for his small wants.

He lived in a queer old house in a broken-down Dublin square for most of his life; but at last he had to remove from its slum-laden surroundings and go to Rathmines, the pretty suburb of Dublin. He surrounded himself with many valuable articles of virtu, mainly old silverware, and he had many historical and valuable treasures. He published several books, the best a history of the Irish Parliament which came to an end in 1800 with the Act of Union, and the last two being a volume of "studies" of the Constitution of the Irish Free State and a lighter volume entitled *What I Have Seen and Heard.*

William Martin Murphy

Another and a very different type of man, and, indeed, one of the most fateful figures in our Party, was William Martin Murphy. Murphy came from Bantry, a small town in County Cork, to push his fortunes in Dublin. He had a genius for finance, and by a lucky accident he got into touch with the then new mode of locomotion, the tramways. It will seem strange, I dare say, to the present generation that I saw the man who was the real pioneer of the tramway in England. He was an American, and his name was George Francis Train.

I went to a lecture which Train delivered at a meeting in Dublin; it was one of the most curious performances I have ever seen. All the arts of the modern evangelist were, perhaps, introduced by him; he would stand on his toes,

put out his arms, shout rhetorical sentences, and he made no concealment of his estimate of his genius and of his possibilities. Among the many ridiculous things he said which remain in my memory was that he was going to help Ireland if Ireland would place him in the White House at Washington. In the midst of all these predictions of future grandeur he was arrested. At that time the Fenian movement in Ireland was still not altogether ended, and the general supposition was that Train was arrested as an emissary and member of this organization. As a matter of fact, he had nothing whatever to do with it, and it turned out afterwards that his arrest was due to some financial difficulty.

He did succeed, however, in running the first tramway in the United Kingdom; it was small, it was somewhere in the region of Birkenhead—but nothing could take away from the credit of having introduced this new and strange method of locomotion into these countries. Long afterwards when I was in America I learned the tragic fate in which these early glories of Train ended. He lived in a modest lodging-house, from whence he came every day to feed the birds in one of the parks of New York, and palpably he was insane, though quietly and benevolently so, for the remainder of his years. Ireland then, and for some time afterwards, seemed to draw to it all the strange and eccentric creatures of the world.

William Martin Murphy, as I have said, was one of the first who saw the immense possibilities of this new method of locomotion, and be became the chairman and manager and practically dictator of the tramway system of Dublin. He followed his success in Dublin by tramways in other parts of the world; he became a chief figure in the tramways of Belfast, he had another tramway in the Isle of Thanet, and he had a tramway in the neighbourhood of

Glasgow. These things made him, for an Irishman, very rich.

These enterprises, almost uniformly successful and always well managed, gave him great power. Fairly late in life he took up politics and became a Member of the House of Commons, a position useful to him from a commercial point of view, as the fortunes of tramways depended largely on the sanction of Parliament. He conceived the ambition of getting hold also of the electric lighting of the city of Dublin; this had been conceded already to the Dublin Corporation, but that body was not very efficient at the time, and there were a good many complaints from the users of electricity in the city.

To take over this industry from the municipality of Dublin would have meant an increase of Mr. Murphy's own wealth by many thousands of pounds. We were just on the eve of a General Election in which we found ourselves, for reasons I will presently give, in great hostility to Mr. Murphy, whom we regarded, and—as it proved—rightly, as the most formidable enemy of the Irish Party—then reunited and reconstituted by the reunion of the Parnellites and anti-Parnellites and the election of Mr. Redmond as its leader, and, though they were still weak, with the possibility of once more having in the House of Commons a united party acting amicably together and in that way regaining its position as the dictatorial power between the different English parties.

Foreseeing this result, I took an active part in opposing this new City of Dublin Electric Lighting Bill. There was a Conservative Party in the House of Commons, with of course many members from Ulster among them, and their hatred of everything Nationalist naturally made them inclined to strike this blow at a Corporation which mainly consisted of Nationalists. The canvassing was

eager on both sides, and the friends of Mr. Murphy—and all the friends of Mr. Healy were also the friends of Mr. Murphy—canvassed wildly for weeks. They managed to get the Bill through the Committee of the House of Commons, in which they had succeeded in getting a sturdy representation of their cause, and in the second last stage they won a victory; but it was by the narrow majority of thirteen—a fateful number, as many remarked at the time. In the last stage of the Bill I was more successful, and it was rejected, and Mr. Murphy and his company remained without the enormous addition to their power and their income.

Mr. Murphy and I had been fairly good friends in the earlier days. He was a man, indeed, with whom it was rather hard to be at enmity in the ordinary intercourse of life. A thin man, with alert movements, with a tranquil expression in his face, and an entire absence of the angry vituperation in which Irishmen usually expressed their feelings, he went through life apparently with unbroken temper and inflexible equanimity. He also had the other great quality of inflexible courage.

William Murphy and James Larkin

Among his other conflicts he got into a struggle with a gentleman named Larkin. Larkin had a meteoric career —not yet ended—in which he was able to rouse the working classes of Dublin, a very poorly paid class in rather sordid conditions, into a solid and defiant body. He tried to be the dictator of Dublin, and for a while he certainly attained to that position. He published a weekly newspaper, which attacked very violently and by name all his political opponents, and chief, of course, Mr. William Murphy, who, as head of the Tramway system, was his

most formidable opponent. There was for a while something like a reign of terror in Dublin, which reached at one time an approach to civil war.

Throughout all this period Mr. Murphy conducted himself with characteristic courage; while people were fearing for his life every second of the day, he walked alone and unperturbed through the streets of Dublin with his umbrella under his arm. In the end his fearlessness had its reward, for he came triumphantly out of the struggle with Mr. Larkin; and his men, who had been in open rebellion, returned to his Company and to their former work.

For some reason or other he had a sleepless and ruthless hatred of the Irish Party under Mr. Redmond, and for more than a decade of years he made war upon it. His chief weapon in this struggle was a daily newspaper, which he established and conducted for many years at the great loss which always comes to a journal fighting for life. It was said that he was more than a hundred thousand pounds to the bad in the first years of this journal. He went on, however, quite calmly, and when people remonstrated with him for going into so hopeless an enterprise from the point of view of a man of business, Mr. Murphy's reply usually was that some men had as their pastimes hunting or gambling or some other frivolity, but this paper gave him the necessary relief from the hard and prosaic work he had to face as a man of business. And in the end he was rewarded. The *Irish Independent*, first, as a cheaper paper than any of its competitors, got to a huge circulation, and was practically the most read paper of all the journals of Ireland.

There was not a day in which it did not contain some open or subtle and quiet attack on the Irish Party. They never did anything right; the members were assailed per-

sonally and politically day after day. Nobody at that time when the National Party was supreme had any particular liking for the *Daily Independent*, but its cheapness, its brightness, and its venom got it innumerable readers, even among those who hated it most. Of all the many agencies that finally broke down the Irish Party, and led to the regime of Sinn Fein and its accompaniments, the *Daily Independent* and William Murphy behind it must be regarded as perhaps the most potent.

To make the study of this remarkable man more complete, it must be added that he was a man of exemplary conduct in private life. He was an ardent Catholic, who, I think, went to Mass every morning all his life. He had perfect control over himself, was a spare eater and practically a teetotaller. His indomitable will and his extraordinary tenacity of purpose made him, though he very rarely spoke, one of the men on whose words and acts the fate of the Party depended.

He was connected, I believe, by family with Mr. Healy, and behind the more prominent and brilliant figure of Mr. Healy there always stood this silent, equable, mild, blue-eyed and thin man—the much more powerful personality of the two. Mr. Healy had many moments, in his swiftly changing temperament, of goodwill, or at least of a desire for reconciliation with the majority of his colleages; but Mr. Murphy never softened, as he never quailed.

Sam Young of Belfast

The only member of the Party who had a large fortune was Mr. Samuel Young. He was a very successful distiller in Belfast, and sent his whisky all over the United Kingdom. He had a cynical but pleasant humour, and one of his favourite jokes was that he had avenged the wrongs of

Ireland largely by the amount of bad Irish whisky he had induced Englishmen to drink.

Married in 1847, the year of the Famine, he had steadily attended to his business, and gradually brought it up to so flourishing a condition that when he died he was able to leave about £300,000. He had the characteristic virtues and faults of a Belfast man. Brought up in the strictest Protestantism and amid ultra-Conservative surroundings, he had a penetrating mind that made him see the justice and inevitableness of Home Rule, and to that cause he gave the staunchest and most consistent support.

Towards the end of his days he adopted—curiously enough for one of his upbringing—a strong leaning towards the Roman Catholic religion, and it was said that among the many promoters of the charitable organizations for the Catholics of Belfast there were high hopes, not merely of his conversion to the true faith, but also of handsome donations towards these organizations. There are many stories of the heroic efforts of the devoted fathers and sisters of these Catholic organizations to secure something from the dying plutocrat—a task difficult everywhere, but perhaps more difficult in Belfast than in most cities, for the Belfast man is notoriously hard-fisted.

Joseph Devlin tells a story of a very wealthy pawnbroker—here I may interject the observation that in my native town and in many other towns of Ireland there were only two people who ever seemed to have reached comfortable fortunes; one was the publican and the other the pawnbroker. One of the bitter recollections of my life was to see four handsome girls leaning out of a window in a house, all eager to gain the attention of the leading pawnbroker of the town, who was walking through the streets in solitary and palpable grandeur and self-esteem.

This is the story told by Mr. Devlin of the Belfast pawn-

broker: This man, notorious both for his wealth and his meanness, at last had to face the fact that he was dying. Representatives of the different charities were gathered around his bed, and they mentioned the sums to which they thought they were entitled. The dying pawnbroker agreed to their demands, but wept at each as he saw a chunk of his money disappearing.

Samuel Young disappointed all the hopes founded on his academic leanings towards the Catholic faith; he died a Protestant, and I believe he left no money to a single Catholic charity. He lived to an immense age, and he was in his place in the House of Commons even in his closing years. Thin, alert, vigilant, full of strange humour, he was always a notable figure.

Mr. Biggar I have already described. Alike in some respects to Mr. Young, he, however, had been carried away, perhaps by political rather than religious feeling, so far as to take the plunge into the Catholic Church. I have always thought that his change was due not so much to religious conviction as to a desire to be in thorough sympathy with the people he loved so much. He, of course, had the reputation of a millionaire; as a matter of fact he left something like £30,000—and that was enough to make a man among the members of the Irish Party a millionaire.

Parnell's Hotel Bill

Parnell himself was a poor man, and his poverty was increased by his absolute indifference to money. He was not an extravagant man; on the contrary, he was what the Irish call a rather "near" man; but he was slatternly, never answered letters, took no notice of bills, and ran up accounts unconsciously and for years at a time. He used to take many of his meals at a hotel in Wicklow, quite close

to his ancestral home; I believe none of his lunches was paid for during a period of nearly a quarter of a century, and when he died one of the claims on his estate were the unpaid bills of his hotel. Once he gave a rather luxurious lunch to his colleagues at the Café Royal; he gave half a sovereign to the head waiter—which we all thought excessive—but the bill was never paid.

He inherited fairly good property, but it was—like so many other Irish properties—steeped in a big mortgage. I have told already how that mortgage was paid off by a popular subscription. But Parnell messed his affairs—there was nothing in his own personal habits to justify a charge of extravagance against him—and the Tribute was distributed carelessly and wastefully. I believe one of the claimants upon it was his mother, who, as I have already said, was an inveterate gambler on the Stock Exchange. As for Parnell himself, he was entirely without self-indulgence in ordinary affairs. I lunched with him for years, practically every day during the sessions of Parliament, in the dining-room of the House of Commons; he always took the same lunch—a Dover sole or a cutlet and a pint of cheap German wine. It was his carelessness about food that brought the nemesis of impaired digestion, and it was one of the first complaints on which he consulted Sir Henry Thompson, then the greatest medical authority in London. It was characteristic of Parnell that in his love of secrecy, very innocently and palpably carried out, he always went to Thompson under an assumed name.

But as to the rank and file of the Party, they were practically paupers. I look back on several of their figures, and there is an ache in my heart when I think of how pathetic and how essentially noble most of them were. They were nearly all married men with small businesses of their own. These businesses had to be managed by their

wives, for they were rarely able to go to Ireland while the House of Commons was sitting, their presence was so necessary to carry on effectively that campaign of obstruction which was the main plank as to tactics of their Parliamentary platform. There was no Parliamentary subsidy at that time; £400 a year would have been to them a fortune beyond their dreams of avarice. They had to depend accordingly on subscriptions from the public, and these subscriptions were casual, uncertain, and never erred on the side of generosity.

It was part of our inner policy to leave both the amounts and the payment of these subsidies entirely in the hands of the treasurer of the fund, who for a long time was Mr. Biggar. To the very end I can say with truth that I never asked, and I never knew, anything of either the recipients of these subscriptions or their amount; I should say that the general average was about £240 a year. A good part of this the members had to send home to those poor wives struggling hard to keep a petty business going; the little they kept for themselves they had to use very sparingly.

How the Irish M.P.'s lived in London

Their method of living was for two of them to take two small bedrooms and a small sitting-room in the cheap district of Pimlico, which had the additional advantage of being close to the House of Commons. The most of them were not speakers beyond mumbling a few words, which had the importance of helping to clog the Parliamentary machine; but for the most part they remained silent. They were not even always present in the House of Commons. There is a chamber in the House which plays an important part in its inner life, sometimes far too important; and that is what is called the Strangers' Smoke-room. This room has

the advantage of admission of any stranger who happens to have a hospitable friend among the members. It is a free-and-easy place, usually with more strangers among its occupants than Members of Parliament. It has sometimes played an important, sometimes a disastrous part, in the inner lives of Members of Parliament. Hospitality is an infectious thing both to the host and his friends.

I have seen one party in the House of Commons, when its fortunes were low and its members somewhat promiscuously chosen, become steadily deteriorated. As a little glimpse of that curious inside life in the House of Commons which takes place outside the Chamber itself, I have seen a member of another party request permission from one of our members to bring his friend into one of the two rooms which were then occupied by the Irish Party. One of these rooms was given to Mr. Redmond when he was leader of the Party, the other to the Irish Whips. Mr. Redmond held all his interviews with his supporters in his room, and it was there that most of our important counsels were held by the leading members of the Party on critical occasions. The other room was quite promiscuous; practically every member of the Party could go in there. They were not ascetics; they smoked there; they took their drinks there; it was even with horror sometimes one saw these idle and bored members finding relief in a game of cards.

Into one of these rooms I saw a Labour member enter one day when we gave him permission to do so. The reason of this exodus from the Strangers' Smoke-room to the Irish Whips' room was soon seen. The Labour member, after some unexpected access of temporary fortune, wanted to stand his friend a bottle of champagne, but did not dare to do so in presence of a large crowd of his own and other parties in the smoke-room. Things are better

now, but there was a time when the Strangers' Smoke-room was the abyss in which members of the House lost their health and their activities.

But taking them as a whole, these poor Irishmen, removed from their wives and their children and their little businesses, were wonderfully well conducted. They looked as they were—bored, and without steady purpose or work; but if they felt these things, they never complained, they went steadily on with their work, always inspired by the growing power of their Party, by their iron discipline, by their entire absorption and faith in the genius of Parnell, and by the unity which these things created, strong and inflexible as steel in their ranks. I must drop a reminiscent tear as I think of these humble, uncomplaining, penniless men, some of them middle-aged, who gave all those years of silent and uncomplaining servitude to the cause. There was little so far as I know of any borrowing of money from each other. I only remember one case of a member of our Party asking me for a little money—it was, as a matter of fact, to get him his dinner, and he was a brilliant and distinguished man!

The Commons' Half-holiday

There was absent one element which forms in the lives of most men an important and cheering factor. Eve never, or very rarely, entered this bleak paradise. Most of the members were married men with families. To the Irish Party there was one evening that must have been especially trying, and that was Wednesday, the day when Parliament had its sitting from 12 to 5. What these poor homeless and wifeless men did on that particular day I find it hard to say. Most of them, I think, celebrated the occasion by dining in a cheap restaurant, and wandered

round the streets until they got to their rooms in Pimlico. Few of them could afford the money for a theatre or music-hall.

I remember one evening I was dining with several of my colleagues—it was in the curious surroundings of the Café Royal of the period. We were surrounded by gentlemen mainly of the artistic profession, and mostly foreign. I could not help looking around at the young painter or author, nearly always accompanied by the Eve that at the moment possessed his affections and doubtless talking on light and frivolous themes; and then at our table—all men and all with no subject of conversation but our political situation. I felt we were all strangers in a strange land, and in painful isolation from the ordinary joys of female society. The Irish are, on the whole, a continent race, with a strong sense of conjugal fidelity; and though some of our members may have got into temporary scrapes, they for the most part led lives of rigid virtue; take away from most of them their pipes, and there was none of the ordinary indulgences of mankind in which they took part. To sum up; the Irish Party consisted of compulsory ascetics, with nothing but their constant attendance in Parliament to give them recreation—which was one of their great sources of strength. They had no joy in life except that of helping their cause. The Irish Party had ascetic paupers as its invisible foundation.

One cannot help recalling these things when in later years these men were pitilessly sacrificed as untrue to their responsibilities. One other feature—an admirable one—I must notice. Each member of the Party had taken the pledge neither to accept office nor any official employment from any English political party. This perhaps had a very good effect in excluding from the Party those rivalries which must come with the competition for office

or for remunerative official employment. Robbed of all hope of any such reward for their political action, the members of the Irish Party were singularly free from personal jealousies.

There was, of course, friction between some of the leading figures; I have seen painful moments when a brilliant speaker cursed by shyness dropped despondently to his seat because some more prominent member, better accustomed to speak and therefore more familiar to the Speaker's eye, stood between him and the speech he was about to make. But that was only a passing phase; on the whole, the party consisted of men tied to each other not only by a common purpose, but by the absence of those sources of personal friction which necessarily come in a great body like the House of Commons, where most of the men have arrived by urge of personal self-esteem or personal longings.

I am anticipating a little, but it gives an additional act to this tragic drama of these penniless men that a great many of them—when the great *bouleversement* of the Irish Party came—were reduced to penury, and some of them I have had to save from actual starvation by the subscriptions of generous friends who have come to their rescue and to mine.

Justin M'Carthy, 1830–1912

Opulent as history is in irony, I do not think there was ever anything much more ironical than that a man like Justin M'Carthy should be a foremost figure in the turbulent ranks of the Irish Party. He was born in Cork, received—perhaps I should say rather gave himself—an excellent education, knew two or three languages very well; and perhaps there was no man in the London of his

day—not even excepting Sir Edmund Gosse—who had a wider and more intimate knowledge of English literature. His memory was almost appalling; you mentioned some obscure poem or poet and at once he could roll out their best things without a moment's hesitation. I tried him once on a poem of Sir William Jones; I dimly recollected it from my boyhood, but he immediately rolled it out to me without any uncertainty or doubt as we sat dining together in the House of Commons.

Always of strong Nationalist principles, he was caught for a while in the whirlpool of the "Young Ireland" movement—a party that more or less believed in physical force for the liberation of Ireland, and that helped to break the power of O'Connell. Justin was a splendid shorthand writer. I saw him many a time when he was at once Member of Parliament and Parliamentary leader writer for the *Daily News*, take down in shorthand on one corner of the Order Paper a sentence which he thought necessary. His first employment in England was rather lucky; it was on the *Liverpool Post*. The proprietor of that paper, a journalist of genius named Whitty, was an Irishman like M'Carthy. M'Carthy began as a man-of-all-work; he reported many speeches in the House of Commons. It throws some light on the difference between those times and ours that then no provincial journal was allowed to have a representative in the Press Gallery. The men who had the privilege of a seat there as reporters for a London journal were sometimes employed, too, by several provincial journals.

There was one bright and energetic reporter there in my days named George Bussey. It was said that a column written by him brought him in several guineas from his different clients. A little story of the period will help to illustrate the life of the Parliamentary journalist at that

epoch. There was a great humorist in the Gallery named Tom Kendall—dead years ago—who died as most of the journalists of the period died—just a little before fifty years of age; journalists then, unlike most of those of the present day, were not long-lived. Kendall, with all the appearance of seriousness, made a bet with Bussy that he could not write a column of *The Times* within an hour. Bussy accepted the bet—which was for 10s. 6d.—and he won it. Kendall then solemnly presented him with the 10s. 6d. with the words, "George, it is a long time since you wrote a column for 10s. 6d."

Justin M'Carthy was not long on the *Liverpool Post* before they recognized his quality, with the result that he received an invitation to come to London and join the staff of a morning daily of that period named the *Star*. (This was a paper that preceded by many years the still existing paper I started of the same name.) It was then the solitary Radical paper in London. It ardently supported Bright and Cobden in their Free Trade campaign; and indeed, I think, was partly financed through them; certainly they were familiar figures in the office, and Justin M'Carthy used to report to me afterwards several of the interesting things Bright said when he paid his almost nightly visit to the office of the paper.

Justin M'Carthy in America, 1868–1870

Soon M'Carthy was advanced to the editorship; he had as his illustrious predecessor John Morley. The *Star* ceased to exist with the triumph of its ideas and its faiths in the appointment of Mr. Bright to Cabinet Office. It may appear very strange to a generation that knew the later Bright that this was regarded as a tremendously daring thing on the part of Gladstone. In the Conservative and

moderate Liberal parties of the time Bright was regarded as an outrageous demagogue; it was a gross misapprehension of his character, for except on certain questions—Free Trade, Peace, and the like—John Bright had strong Conservative instincts, which were unveiled in his later years.

With the disappearance of the *Star* M'Carthy felt himself at liberty to carry out a favourite project, which was to make a lecturing tour in the United States—a tour which made him a very well-informed authority on American politics. It was only a man of his sanguine temperament that could have gone through the terrible drudgery of such a tour; he not only did it, but he enjoyed it. This was largely due to the fact that he had made an ideally happy marriage. His wife—a lady from Cork like himself—was of striking beauty. She had a vast mass of white hair drawn back from her forehead, and her entrance into any gathering, however large, excited attention, and she was at most gatherings of the time, for her husband had joined the *Daily News*, and, of course, could go to every function. They were indefatigable theatre-goers, and they were never apart.

In addition to his newspaper articles M'Carthy became a popular and an indefatigable novelist. His stories are nearly forgotten now, but they had a great vogue and were really brilliant pictures of the men and women of his time. Their chief theme was always love. Those were the days when publishing was in a very different condition from that of our own time; every novel was published at the big price of 31s. 6d. Scarcely any individual bought these expensive novels; they had to depend for their circulation practically altogether on Mudie's and other libraries. I remember one of the many things that Justin M'Carthy said to me that was indica-

tive of the temper of the period, that a novelist should have in his mind's eye in all his stories the unmarried girl of seventeen or eighteen; they were the main body of novel readers, and to them, therefore, the libraries made their first and chief appeal.

At this time the penniless Irish boy that left Cork years ago was, for a journalist of the period, in a highly satisfactory position, financially and also socially. He must have been earning what would then be regarded as the gigantic income of two or three thousand a year. A man of fascinatingly agreeable manners, gentle, modest, as brilliant in talk as in writing, he was the darling of London society. And all these things he sacrificed without hesitation because he felt that it was his duty, as an Irishman, to do his part in advancing the Home Rule movement, when doubtless he would have been an acceptable candidate for the Liberal Party, which at that time represented solid sense and proper respectability as compared with the wild young men of the young Home Rule movement who were turning the House of Commons upside down. In other words, M'Carthy, with his strong sense of patriotism, felt it his duty to go with the powerless and the disreputable rather than with the more moderate party, though in the main he was in thorough agreement with them.

M.P. for Longford, 1879

Soon the storm burst upon him. Parnell had started that ruthless obstructive campaign which made him and all his colleagues and supporters anathema. None of them probably much cared; but society closed its doors against them; the newspapers were violent and virulent even among the Liberal organs in denunciation of them, both politically and personally; and from the moment Justin

The Irish Parliamentary Party, April 1886

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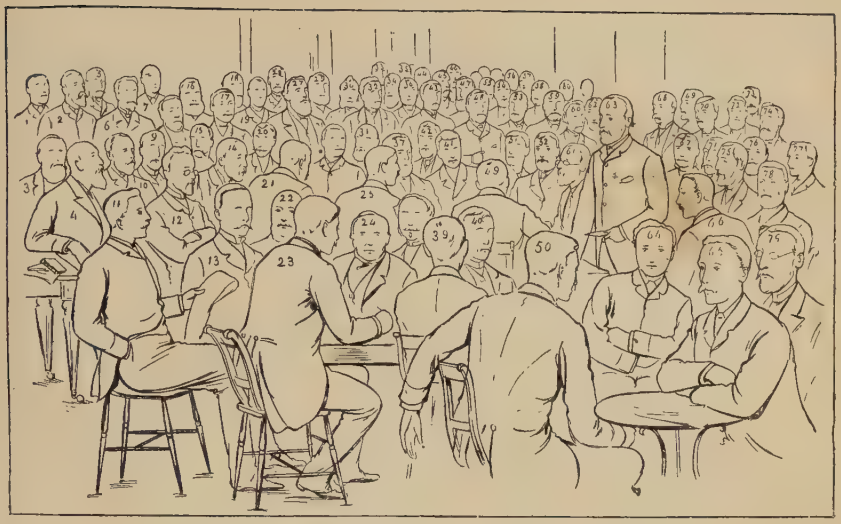

Key to the picture of the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1886.

1. J. Stack (North Kerry).
2. W. M. Murphy (St. Patrick's, Dublin City).
3. Dr. J. E. Kenny (Cork County, South).
4. Jeremiah Jordan (West Clare).
5. J. R. Cox (East Clare).
6. E. Dwyer Gray (Dublin City Harbour).
7. Bernard Kelly (South Donegal).
8. W. J. Lane (Cork County, East).
10. P. J. O'Brien (North Tipperary).
11. P. A. Chance (South Kilkenny).
12. Timothy M. Healy (North Monaghan).
13. J. M. Smithwick (Kilkenny City).
14. W. J. Corbett (East Wicklow).
15. P. J. Power (East Waterford).
16. L. P. Hayden (South Leitham).
17. Maurice Healy (Cork City).
18. Sir J. W. M'Kenna (South Monaghan).
19. A. Blaine (South Armagh).
20. J. C. Flynn (Cork County, North).
21. T. H. Gill (South Louth).
22. J. Barry (South Wexford).
23. P. R. Condon (East Tipperary).
24. Joseph Biggar (West Cavan).
25. E. Sheil (South Meath).
27. W. Abraham (West Limerick).
28. Joseph Nolan (North Louth).
29. L. Conolly (South Longford).
30. Matthew Harris (East Galway).
31. Dr. Andrew Commins (South Roscommon).
32. D. Crilly (South Mayo).
33. P. Sheehan (East Kerry).
34. J. F. O'Brien (South Mayo).
35. E. M. Marum (North Kilkenny).
36. J. Leahy (South Kildare).
37. Garrett Byrne (West Wicklow).
39. Edward Harrington (West Kerry).
40. M. J. Kenny (Mid Tyrone).
41. T. P. O'Connor (Liverpool, Scotland Ward).
42. T. M. Carew (North Kildare).
44. J. F. Small (South Downshire).
45. Bernard Molloy (King's County, Birr).
46. Dr. Kevin Izod O'Doherty (North Meath).
48. J. J. Clancy (Dublin County, North).
49. Arthur O'Connor (East Donegal).
50. Donal Sullivan (South Westmeath).
51. Justin Huntly M'Carthy (Newry).
52. Thomas Sexton (South Sligo).
53. James Tuite (North Westmeath).
54. Dr. J. Fox (King's County, Tullamore).
55. James E. O'Doherty (North Donegal).
56. John Finucane (East Limerick).
57. H. J. Gill, (Limerick City).
58. Major J. P. Nolan (North Galway).
59. Patrick O'Hea (West Donegal).
60. W. J. Reynolds (East Tyrone).
61. Justin M'Carthy (North Longford).
62. John Deasy (West Mayo).
63. Charles Stewart Parnell (Cork City).
64. W. Redmond (North Fermanagh).
65. T. Harrington (St. Stephen's Green, Dublin).
66. H. Campbell (South Fermanagh).
67. J. J. O'Kelly (North Roscommon).
68. P. J. Foley (Galway, Connemara).
69. Jasper D. Pyne (West Waterford).
70. Sir T.G. Esmonde, Bart. (Dublin County, South).
71. David Sheehy (South Galway).
72. T. Mayne (Mid Tipperary).
73. John O'Connor (South Kerry).
74. Peter M'Donald (North Sligo).
75. John Dillon (East Mayo).
76. Richard Power (Waterford City).
77. J. E. Redmond (North Wexford).
78. Timothy Daniel Sullivan (Dublin City, College Green, Lord Mayor).
79. W. O'Brien (South Tyrone).
80. T. O'Hanlon (East Cavan).

M'Carthy joined the ranks he ostracized himself from all his old social friends, with the honourable exception of Lady St. Helier, then Mrs. Jeune.

Fortunately his pen was still a powerful weapon in his hands. The *Daily News* employed him as their Parliamentary leader writer, and in that employment he lived till his retirement from Parliament. It was a pathetic sight to see this middle-aged man slipping into old age, retiring for an hour or two nightly to a quiet part of the House of Commons, and writing amid all its distractions his nightly leader.

He was a singular combination of gentleness and shyness and inflexible courage. This man, who could scarcely refrain from a blush when he met a stranger, would willingly have ascended the gallows in defence of his principles. I once laughingly remarked, though with a serious thought behind, that it was a pity he was not hanged for Ireland; he would have gone to the gallows with such serene and philosophic acceptance of his fate.

His sense of duty was almost super-punctilious. In the struggle that came over Parnell he took reluctantly and with moderate language and action the side of those who had decided against Parnell. It was a remarkable proof of the essentially good-natured spirit of both the men that even in the middle of the fierce controversy going on at the time of the split, Parnell and M'Carthy used frequently to meet socially, and sometimes privately, and discuss in an amicable spirit questions of finance outside the central controversy.

Then, as vice-chairman of the Party, M'Carthy was substituted for the leadership of the anti-Parnellites. Parnell in one of his addresses spoke contemptuously of Mr. M'Carthy as a nice old gentleman for a tea-party—a jibe that, as will have been seen, was not altogether un-

justified by the contrast between the personality of Mr. M'Carthy and the tempestuous and angry passions which were then dividing the Irish members. But, it could be added, if there were a tea-party or any other gathering where the presence of Mr. M'Carthy was, he thought, a necessary duty, M'Carthy would be there.

I anticipate a little in saying that after Parnell's death, when M'Carthy was once more the head of a large Party, there were constant and generally acrimonious discussions in the committee of the Party which had been appointed to control its policy and tactics. Sometimes these committee meetings would take place on every day of the week—sometimes twice or thrice in the same day—M'Carthy was always there. He became so absorbed in this work that he forgot all about his own personal affairs.

I tell the story with some reluctance, but as I desire to give a true picture of the realities behind the public appearances and popular reputations of Members of the House of Commons, I think it necessary to do so. M'Carthy had a devoted son and daughter, both still living. The poor girl, whose life had been darkened and spoiled by her father's entrance into Irish politics, was his housekeeper and his guardian; and from her one day we received a private communication that her father was going blindly on as a political leader, forgetting entirely, among other things, his own pecuniary circumstances. She revealed the fact that he had ceased to make the large professional income which he at one time earned, and that at that moment his financial position could be evolved from the fact that the money to his credit in the bank was just thirty pounds.

We called a meeting together of three or four members of the Party whose pecuniary circumstances were a little better than those of the average member. We all four

agreed to put up something, except one—and he was far and away the richest member of the Party; and we also agreed to issue a private circular to some of the friends of our poor colleague in other parties.

When I came down from this meeting to go to the cloakroom of the House where members deposited their overcoats and umbrellas before entering the Chamber—in those days when every member wore his hat in the House we did not leave our hats there as do the members of modern times, who are almost unanimously in favour of the bared head. The attendants there become friendly intimates of the Members of Parliament, and in addition to their regular salaries they, of course, now and then obtain little perquisites—that is not a rule, in fact it is somewhat exceptional until perhaps the end of the Session. The richest members were rather remarkable for their tight-fistedness in this situation; some of the Irish members erred in the opposite direction, and M'Carthy with his generous heart was of course one of them. As I say, I came down to this cloakroom just after I had heard the painful and distressing discussion of the shortness of poor M'Carthy's own means, and I saw him fumbling in his little tattered purse and take out a shilling to give to one of the attendants—one of the most poignant contrasts I have ever experienced.

CHAPTER IV

"Labby"—Travels in Europe—Gambling at Homburg—Baron Taunton—The *World* and *Truth*—Member for Northampton—The Queen's Theatre in Long Acre—Parliamentary wild-goose chases.

Henry Labouchere, 1831–1912

ANY description of Parliamentary life or of Parliamentary figures would be incomplete without a portrait of Mr. Henry Labouchere—or "Labby" as he was universally called. I will describe him at some length, for the reason that he was typical of an epoch both in social and Parliamentary life. In himself he was not very effective as a Parliamentarian—he had no eloquence, he had even no great coherence in speech, though he had a fairly clear mind and, contrary to what was generally supposed, and what he tried himself to convey, he had strong, even violent and honest convictions—but he took as much pains to have himself taken comically and triflingly as other men do to gain the repute of wisdom and seriousness. He was too professionally a cynic in speech to be really cynical; to employ an old phrase, he was the fanfaron of his cynicism.

Sometimes his comments on men would appear to be ill-natured and even mendacious—rejoicing in their weaknesses and rarely admitting the good in them. One of his favourite butts—though I have no doubt he had in his heart a great respect for him—was Mr. Gladstone; "Labby" summed up his views with regard to him once in the phrase, that he did not object to Mr. Gladstone claiming that he had the four aces of divine privileges in his hand, but he

did object to his claiming also that he had another ace up his sleeve.

His life before he became a prominent politician was typical of a period when members of the aristocracy, especially if they were wealthy, led a strange life without any higher purpose than finding amusement. His father was the last kind of parent one would expect for such a son. He was almost a professional puritan, and one of the pillars of Exeter Hall when that place was the central temple of the ultra-religious of the country. I do not think there was much love lost between father and son.

Perhaps to keep him out of mischief, the father put him into the Diplomatic Service, a very useful training if "Labby" were a man who wanted to make serious use of his opportunities. He had varied and somewhat astonishing experiences in that Service. He was in America before the Civil War, and there was something almost uncanny in hearing him talk of an historic and ancient figure like Daniel Webster as an intimate friend, and of visits to States like Wisconsin and Indiana when they were still little better than wildwood and a waste of waters. America was then in a crude state, and "Labby's" pictures of its personalities were also crude.

But with all his weaknesses there was one from which "Labby" was always immune. He never cared for alcohol and, except when he was abroad and did not risk drinking water, he never touched wine. This lent greater point to his description of the prolonged bouts in which the Senators of his early days in the United States used to join. Daniel Webster made the greatest speech of his life, the speech that was the gospel and the appeal for the maintenance of the unity of the United States, long before the Civil War broke out; Labouchere, in speaking of such a discourse, would be much more likely to tell you the number

of drinks which the brilliant orator had taken than of the poetic and fervent diction of the great oration.

Then he went through several capitals of Europe. The story is mentioned of his getting a summons to London from Constantinople, where he was then stationed; and of his writing after an intolerable amount of delay that the delay was due to the fact that he had received no money to pay his expenses, and he was accordingly walking from his Turkish station the long distance to London. He could tell strange stories of the little German courts and of their intrigues and love affairs—courts that have been swept away by successive cyclones since the days of his youth.

At this period of his life, and for many years afterwards, he was possessed by the spirit of gambling. Among his many stations was Frankfort-on-Main, then the capital of the German confederation, and he would describe with much gusto his long nights with Bismarck—then only growing into fame—and of the interminable number of bocks of beer which the great Chancellor used to consume in the course of the all-night sittings which he enjoyed in his robust and defiant youth. With characteristic exaggeration, I am afraid, he used to describe Bismarck as coming into the beer-house with unclean hands. I narrated that to a German once—he was a broad-minded man without any personal feeling—but he scoffed at that as impossible to a man brought up in aristocratic circles and belonging to one of the oldest families of Prussia.

Homburg at that time was the great gambling centre of Europe—the Monte Carlo of the time—but Homburg was some miles from Frankfort, and "Labby" used to tell of how he would employ two horses to carry him to and from the gambling tables of Homburg so as to lose no time from the pleasure of gambling. As a gambler he also played a considerable part at one time in the life of Nice—he and

another great gentleman of the period used to keep the bank for months every season. He told me once of his winning at one deal of the cards four thousand pounds—he had already lost that amount, so that he came out "square". I asked him how he dared make such a huge stake; he answered that he had caught sight of the cards of his opponent, and therefore knew that he was safe. But one must express a certain amount of doubt as to the authenticity of these stories; "Labby" was so fond of painting persons—including himself—in the darkest possible colours.

Suddenly this life of an almost professional gambler came to an end on his return to England and his practical retirement from the Diplomatic Service. He used to describe the reception which he got from his father—he had early left that parent's side; and of all places in the world he chose for his lodgings a sporting hotel in a Covent Garden square, which was then the centre of the wild or Bohemian young men of London—of Thackeray and Charles Dickens among others. When he entered his father's home after years of absence, "Labby" was received with a cool "How d'ye do?" and a question as to whether he was going to stop in London or not, and then the interview came to an end.

Baron Taunton in Parliament

His youth and early manhood were enormously influenced by a strange family arrangement. His grandfather, who was Dutch by birth, became a partner in Baring's bank. He left a vast fortune, but one of the conditions was that the money should go to the oldest surviving male after his death. "Labby" had an uncle who was apparently as serious as his nephew was frivolous; this uncle had quite a distinguished Parliamentary career, held among other

offices that of Chief Secretary for Ireland. He was the elder also of the two sons of the founder of the family. He was married twice; in one case the legend was that the wife was found dead in her bed with a dead male baby by her side. The second marriage took place to a lady of a notoriously prolific family; this lady had several children, but all female; and "Labby" would chuckle as he described how he paid a visit to this unhappy parent and professed to condole with her on her having the misfortune of not bearing a male child. In the end "Labby" became in this way the eldest male, and therefore the heir of the great fortune which was put down at something like £250,000. This made him a rich and independent man, and enabled him to take his own course in everything. He was too restless and energetic to remain an idle man of wealth; he was careful to parsimony with his money, and he was almost an ascetic in his habits. His one expense was innumerable cigarettes. He was practically never a quarter of an hour, however serious the business in the House, without smoking a cigarette.

The gambling fever had not yet left the blood of Labouchere; but he went to the Stock Exchange of London instead of the gaming table of Nice. Then came another turn in his career. Edmund Yates had just started a journal of an entirely new character at that epoch, a journal in which personality played the chief part. "Labby" offered his services as financial editor. Everything he wrote was bound to create attention from the qualities of the writer; the articles were bold, they were cynical, they were penetrating. He had a genius for personal attack, and at least twice in his life he had been seriously assaulted by persons whom he was supposed to have maligned. In one case it was a stockbroker; in the other, it was the first Lord Burnham, one of the best-natured of men; and there were some marks

on "Labby's" face which I have always thought were the scars of these encounters.

"Labby" and "Truth"

The success of the *World* and the great notice of his own articles gave him the idea that he could become a newspaper proprietor and editor himself, which led to the establishment of that formidable journal *Truth*—a name he chose himself, with the characteristic observation that people would buy it to see what new lie "Labby" could invent each week. The paper was a big success from the start, largely because of the boldness of its comments on all kinds of things and persons. Though I do not suppose "Labby" knew of them himself until after they had appeared, there were some decidedly free observations on the Royalties of the period, observations which excited the lasting anger of Queen Victoria, and were destined many years later to destroy the last of "Labby's" great ambitions by excluding him from either Ministerial office or even the position of an Ambassador.

He had tried several times for election before he ultimately entered the House—I was one of the agents that brought him to Parliament. Being a member of a small Radical Club in Lambeth, I joined in the movement to substitute a Radical for one of the two rather moderate-minded aldermen who represented the Lambeth constituency, and among others we appealed to "Labby" to become our candidate. He received us kindly; he had been a fairly outspoken assailant of the Disraeli Government and an ardent supporter of Mr. Gladstone's campaign against it. These invitations brought him once more into the light of day. He did not stand for Lambeth, but his new notoriety recommended him to Northampton, then

looking out for a candidate as a colleague to Mr. Bradlaugh; thus "Labby" became Member for Northampton, and so he remained till his voluntary retirement many years afterwards.

"Labby" became, then, the most assiduous Member of the House of Commons. He was never absent from his seat except—as I have already indicated—when he had to rush to the consolation of a cigarette; and he was also able by his wealth to entertain largely. It was a fad of his to buy houses, and he occupied several fine mansions: one in Queen Anne's Gate, another—a stately mansion—now turned into a Public Office in Abingdon Street, its wide doors just opposite the House of Lords entrance. Just before that he had bought a house in Grosvenor Gardens—one of the curious sights of the time was "Labby" walking down early in the morning from Grosvenor Gardens to the House of Commons wearing a small cap. The explanation was that during those days, which were rather tempestuous in the House, there was a great demand for seats in the House of Commons, and it was held that in order to obtain a seat a member should be first in putting either his hat or cap in the place he meant to occupy, and "Labby's" cap was meant to appropriate his favoured seat.

The choice of his last house gave "Labby"—with his intense interest in the House of Commons—exactly the place that suited him; but the Government decided that this house was necessary for a Government office. Many amusing stories were told at the time of "Labby's" hard bargaining before he was induced to part with this favourite residence.

Absorbed as "Labby" then was in the House of Commons, it did not prevent him from playing a large social part. His money was very judiciously invested, so that he had a very handsome income. He gave many entertainments as

time went on, and used to hold large dinner-parties. No man was less fitted for the part of a good host. He himself, as I have said, was an ascetic in his habits; in addition to not drinking any wine, he was quite indifferent to what he ate, and he ate very little. The one really expensive item of his life was his cigarettes, and he used to boast that he bought of these the cheapest brand in the market. I have seen him often breakfasting, and in five minutes he had disposed of two cups of tea and a single egg, and immediately rushed to his cigarettes and his papers.

In addition to his houses in London he owned for many years a beautiful Thames-side residence at Twickenham which was still called Pope's Villa, although a good deal of the original building had disappeared since it was inhabited by the poet. There was still, however, the grotto in which, legend declares, the poor little hunchback, Pope, went on his knees and declared his love to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu—a robust, dazzling, and ironical beauty. On the other side of the road was a large meadow, and there "Labby" gave some beautiful open-air theatrical entertainments.

Queen's Theatre in Long Acre

It need scarcely be said that the crowds which came on the summer Sundays to this lovely place were drawn mainly from Bohemian circles. Through his wife, a once celebrated actress, "Labby" was brought in touch with many theatrical people. He was for at least ten years the manager of the old Queen's Theatre in Long Acre. He used to boast that he lost no money, though that was not the general opinion. It was characteristic of "Labby" that once when in a conversation, and after he had attained to his glories, Henry Irving was corrected in a statement he made to "Labby" about their old connection. "And to think", said

the great actor, "that I was once glad to receive five pounds a week from you, 'Labby'." "Three pounds," corrected "Labby".

This was the man who took up some Parliamentary time almost every day he was in the House of Commons, and he sometimes started surprises or discoveries which ran into weeks. It was characteristic of the essential frivolity of his mind that one of these wild-goose chases was after what he regarded as undue clemency shown to some people associated with an odious scandal. It was a filthy subject, nobody wanted to touch it, but "Labby" insisted on pressing it forward, and he actually expressed the conviction that he would be able to turn out the Government on this case. A British Ministry destroyed on such a ground was unthinkable, and, of course, it ended in nothing.

But I would be unjust to him to say that "Labby" had not very strong and very sincere convictions. He was not only a "Little Englander", but very proud of the title. Fundamentally he was extremely fond of money, and any policy which involved an addition to the expenditure of the country was therefore sure to find him in opposition. He held to that conviction rigidly and honestly. This was perhaps one of the reasons why he became at an early period an indefatigable and ruthless enemy of all the big enterprises in South Africa with which the name of Cecil Rhodes was connected. His moment came when, as he had rather forecast, some of these operations involved us in the war with the Boers. It was his figure that lay behind the Committee of Enquiry which brought Rhodes practically before the House of Commons; and "Labby" was there every day, vehement, merciless, untiring. He did not succeed in making a case for prosecution against Mr. Rhodes, but he did land Dr. Jameson and the other leaders of the famous Raid in the dock and in prison.

I have drawn the portrait of this man at full length largely to show the kind of person and form of events that took up so much of the time of the House of Commons. It is not altogether an edifying picture, and it shows some of the weaknesses of the composition and rules of the House of Commons, at that time, that a man, essentially attending the House as a pastime after many other experiences of life, should be able to play so important a part—a part not discreditable to him, but painfully characteristic of the methods of the House of Commons. One must dismiss it by saying that after all it only proves that the House of Commons is very human.

CHAPTER V

The extravagance of Captain O'Shea—His marriage to Kate Wood—Indifference and practical separation—His demands on Parnell—The Galway election—Parnell forces his candidate—Speech that turned the day.

LET me now try to suggest something like portraits of the personalities that had entered into the inner life of Parnell. And first, as to Captain O'Shea. He belonged to a class which is well known in Ireland; the sons of men who, in the debacle of so many of the old landlords by the Famine, became rapidly rich. Captain O'Shea's grandfather, who had some property in Limerick, had three sons (Henry, John, and Thaddeus). John went to Spain, where a branch of the family had been long settled; founded a bank and became rich. Henry was the father of Captain O'Shea. He found the estates mortgaged up to the utmost limit, resolved to work, bound himself to a solicitor in Dublin and, showing great ability in his profession, and especially in the perfect genius of pulling together estates that appeared hopelessly bankrupt, he got a large business and became a wealthy man.

The Captain of Hussars

This is just the type of Irishman who desires to find a superior position for his son, and accordingly he allowed his son Willie to enter the 18th Hussars, giving him somewhat perilous advice in the words: "First become a smart officer; secondly, do what the other men do, and send the bill in to me". O'Shea at this time was handsome, gay,

irresponsible, and "of a ready—if rather barbed—sense of humour. His cosmopolitan education had given him an ease of manner and self-assurance that made him popular with his contemporaries."

In addition he had the advantage over his contemporaries by an excellent knowledge of languages and of countries gained by his frequent visits to his relatives in Spain. He was a daring and successful rider, and won many races.

He took his father's advice literally as to enjoying himself and sending in the bill. His father purchased for him a captaincy, thinking that perhaps the superior rank would bring a sense of responsibility to his most affectionate but rather spendthrift son. The results were bills that were a burden even on a wealthy solicitor. In a few years bills were sent in to the large amount of £15,000. The father pointed out that such extravagance would diminish the allowance of his son's mother and sister, and it might necessitate his leaving his regiment. O'Shea fell in with the suggestion; eventually he left his regiment just before his marriage.

His first appearance to the eyes of Kate Wood was characteristic of the man. "I was pleased", she said, "with his youthful looks and vivacity. His dress pleased me also", she goes on; "and though it would appear a terrible affair in the eyes of a modern young man, it was perfectly correct then for a young officer in the 18th Hussars, and extremely becoming to Willie: a brown velvet coat, cut rather fully, sealskin waistcoat, black-and-white check trousers, and an enormous carbuncle and diamond pin in his curiously folded scarf."

Kate Wood came of a good family. Her father was a baronet and a parson; she was the niece of the Wood who, as Lord Hatherley, became Lord Chancellor; she was also

a sister of Sir Evelyn Wood. I never saw her that I know of. I do, however, recollect once seeing Parnell climbing the stairs of the Ladies' Gallery—there was no lift in those days—with a lady. He had a certain deprecatory smile which I had already recognized in his moments of partial embarrassment. I do not think the lady beside him could have been Mrs. O'Shea, for my recollection in a very passing glance was of a woman whose main characteristic was stoutness and who rather puffed as she climbed the stairs.

But I understand from all the witnesses of her youth that she was a very beautiful woman. She had lived in her early days close to Aldershot; knew many officers; was very much sought after, and had a very lively temperament. She herself tells the story of how officers used secretly to send her and her sister bouquets. "One evening", she says, "when my sister and I were preparing for bed there was a sound of something falling on the balcony. Half-laughing, and half-frightened, we peeped out, and there espied two lovely bouquets of flowers. They had evidently been flung up from the road below.

"After a breathless consultation we cautiously peered over the balcony, and saw two young men—apparently gentlemen—gazing up to see the effect of their floral bombardment."

She confesses to have been drawn to O'Shea: he was a fine athlete, and "used to fill me with admiration by jumping over my pony's back without touching him at all". And then comes this disturbing reflection: "I sometimes thought I would leave him during these days"; but propinquity did its work, and in the end she—I think one might almost use the word—drifted.

The flirtation between herself and O'Shea went on for three years. There is also another rather disconcerting

revelation of her inner feelings during this period. "I had now known Willie very well", she says, "for three years; but I was very young, and a curious distaste for my 'love affair' had grown up within me. I felt a desire to be left free and untrammelled by any serious thoughts of marriage; and, though I had not grown to dislike Willie, I wished him away when he looked fondly at me, and half-consciously I longed to get back to the days when men were little more to me than persons to be avoided, as generally wanting something to be fetched or carried."

The Enterprises of Captain O'Shea

Realizing the state of her daughter's mind perhaps better than herself, Lady Wood dismissed O'Shea; he went abroad, and Kate did not see him again for a long time. In the end, they were married at Brighton in 1867. Soon after their marriage O'Shea invested the £4000 he had received for his commission in the Spanish bank started by his uncle John. A year in Spain brought the banking partnership to an end, and the young couple returned to England.

The next enterprise of Captain O'Shea to meet his financial difficulties was a mine, and he was able to raise a considerable amount of capital. His wife did her best to help him in all these enterprises, and was much assisted by Mr. Christopher Weguelin, who, according to legend, was said at one time to have been very keenly interested in her. This kept the husband for eighteen months in Spain, entirely away from his English home and from his wife, and already there had begun that practical separation which was complete by the time Parnell came into her life. "We were pleased", she says, "to see one another again, but once more the wearing friction caused by our

totally dissimilar temperaments began to make us feel that close companionship was impossible, and we mutually agreed that he should have rooms in London, visiting Eltham to see myself and the children at week-ends." But, as she says, the regularity of his week-end visits became much broken.

And then, seeking at once occupation and perhaps prospects of financial ease, O'Shea tried another avenue, and, meeting The O'Gorman Mahon, he stood with him for County Clare. His wife encouraged him, because, as she put it, "it would give him occupation he liked, and keep us apart, and therefore good friends".

O'Shea and The O'Gorman Mahon were returned for Clare. The O'Gorman Mahon one night opened his heart to Mrs. O'Shea, and confessed that they had both made themselves responsible for £2000 for the expenses of the election, and that they hadn't a penny to meet it.

In addition there were the small domestic cares of unpaid bills. Mrs. O'Shea always insisted that those little suppers that she gave nightly to Parnell should be of the best, though of the simplest. Parnell was always a very simple eater, and his supper consisted of grilled sole, followed by partridge, pheasant, or wild duck. "No shop in Eltham", says Captain O'Shea's son, "was considered good enough for Mr. Parnell's meals, and all the food used to be obtained from Bellamy's in Jermyn Street." Bellamy's once sent a long overdue bill to Captain O'Shea at Albert Mansions. O'Shea, when he received this along with a bill of his own, was very much enraged. "I am afraid", says Captain O'Shea's son, "I told a few lies to pacify him. My mother was the kindest and most generous and hospitable of women. Many sponged on her", he says, "at all times. A poor parson who came to ask for a loan of £10 went away with £100."

Such were the internal conditions of the O'Shea family when Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell had their first meeting. O'Shea up to this time and up to his election had never seen Parnell, but The O'Gorman Mahon was a veteran in Irish politics, and advised both the husband and wife to get in contact and on good terms with Parnell.

George Meredith as Paid Reader

And now for another important figure in the drama. This was Mrs. Wood. She had been the wife of Benjamin Wood. Her husband had died many years before, and, writes Mrs. O'Shea, "My aunt never alluded to him"—a glimpse of her character. She had inherited the large fortune of the family, and lived in a large house with spacious grounds. She was a well cultivated woman, and knew the literature of the eighteenth century. She was a good Latin and French scholar, and knew Greek so well that up to the last week of her life she translated Greek verse. She had people to read to her, and for many years George Meredith used to receive from her a salary of £300 a year for reading and talking to her for certain hours once a week.

She was almost eighteenth century in her dress and in her thoughts, and had a somewhat Voltairian outlook on religion. Once when an officious friend offered to read Scripture to her on the occasion of an illness, a look of consternation came over her face, and she replied, "I thank you, Mr. Blank, but I am still well able to read, and the Scriptures do not interest me".

Mrs. Wood became as devotedly attached to Mrs. O'Shea as if she were her daughter, gave her a house called Wonersh Lodge, furnished it, and made her an allowance for the bringing-up of herself and her family, and ulti-

mately left her and her children all her large fortune, amounting to something between £200,000 and £250,000. But the divorce proceedings ruined Mrs. O'Shea in this as in many other respects. Claims arose from all parts contesting the will on various grounds, and £40,000 of the entire sum was spent in litigation, leaving the share of Mrs. O'Shea and her children proportionately reduced.

While the elections had been going on in England, there came one election in Ireland which had a tremendous, and as events proved, a disastrous effect upon the position of Parnell and the unity of the Irish Party. I have already told how, during our first trip to Ireland at the beginning of the election of 1885, Parnell had been accompanied by Captain O'Shea. The journey is alluded to in one of Parnell's letters to Mrs. O'Shea. By this time he was signing his letters "Your own King and Husband". Parnell discussed in this letter the insistence of O'Shea on getting a seat in Parliament, but O'Shea accompanied this insistence with the condition that he should not have to sign the pledge of the Party. He wanted to be returned unpledged. This, being interpreted, meant that he would not consent to pledge himself against the acceptance of office.

What Captain O'Shea was after was evidently some place in the Government, and above all to be separated from the Irish members. Mrs. O'Shea, in her autobiography, recounts the snobbish contempt with which Captain O'Shea regarded his countrymen who followed Parnell. The clothes of the Irish members were the especial abomination of the overdressed dandy. Mrs. O'Shea had reasons of her own for supporting the claims of her husband. "I was very anxious", she writes, "that Willie should remain in Parliament. Politics were a great interest to him and gave him little time to come down to Eltham. When

he did so the perpetual watchfulness and diplomacy I had to observe were extremely irksome to me. Years of neglect, varied by quarrels, had killed my love for him long before I met Parnell, and since the February of 1882 I could not bear to be near him."

The Stranglehold on Parnell, 1886

All these things and the election kept Parnell busy in Ireland, but it was with much inward suffering. Here is a passage of one of his letters which will show the state of his mind: "I often wish that I had wings and an invisible suit, so that I could fly across to you every evening when my day's work is done". But he could not fly across, and he had this menacing figure of Captain O'Shea always before him. O'Shea, too, was very bellicose; he still was so ignorant of Irish politics, or so confident in the deadly stranglehold in which he held Parnell, that for a considerable time he insisted that he should be returned again for County Clare, or any other seat, but always under the condition that he should not take the pledge. O'Shea insisted on the services which he had rendered to Parnell, and accused him of ingratitude and treachery.

At this moment the services of Lord Richard Grosvenor, the Chief Liberal Whip, were called in. Mrs. O'Shea saw him and told him of her strong wish that her husband should again be a Member of Parliament, and urged his selection for one of the seats. Lord Richard pointed out the difficulties, winding up, "And we don't even know what O'Shea's politics are!" " 'You know Chamberlain's', I replied", writes Mrs. O'Shea. She communicated to her husband the conversation with Lord Richard Grosvenor. O'Shea replied that he was going to see Chamberlain in Birmingham; he then added that energetic action on

Gladstone's part was necessary. Thereupon Mrs. O'Shea wrote to Gladstone, but Mr. Gladstone rather shrank before this difficult position, referring her to Lord Richard, but expressing, however, the view that he would be sorry if O'Shea were not in the new Parliament.

Letter after letter came from O'Shea, always depicting himself as an injured man. "I have been treated in blackguard fashion", he says in one of his letters, "and I mean to hit back a stunner. I have everything ready; no drugs could make me sleep last night, and I packed my shell with dynamite. It cannot hurt my friend (Chamberlain), and it will send a blackguard's reputation with his deluded countrymen into smithereens. I have got your telegram. He won't be of high 'importance' soon."

I will not go further into the tangled negotiations in which Mrs. O'Shea worked assiduously to get the support of Gladstone and of Lord Richard Grosvenor, with the result, as already known, that Mr. Stephens, the Liberal candidate for Exchange division of Liverpool, was withdrawn, and O'Shea was chosen as Liberal candidate, and, as I have already told, was defeated by a small majority.

"And now", as Mrs. O'Shea writes, "came the demand we expected from Willie (her husband). He could not bear to be out of Parliament, more than all he could not bear to be out of it by defeat, and he went to Parnell in the House and insisted that his 'services in regard to the Kilmainham Treaty and also in acting between Chamberlain, Mr. Gladstone, and himself' deserved the recognition of Parnell's support in again trying for an Irish seat. Moreover, he declared that Parnell had long before solemnly promised him his support should the occasion arise, soon after their first meeting indeed." "Willie", continues Mrs. O'Shea, "fumed and urged his point with the deadly, nagging persistency that I had so often known and

given in to, in the old days, for the mere sake of hearing no more of a subject." "Willie", she adds, "would give me no peace. I must see Mr. Gladstone, Lord Richard Grosvenor, Mr. Parnell."

Such was the dreadful position of Parnell at this critical moment; his deadly secret and his overwhelming passion for Mrs. O'Shea on the one side—his sense of the impossibility of forcing O'Shea on an Irish constituency, and all the dangers to his position and his movement which such an act would involve—and on the other, this man pursuing him night and day, with abuse, with threats, and, above all, with the threat (unspoken but understood by the two men) of the exposure of the relations between his wife and Parnell.

Parnell, O'Shea, and Galway

My double election for Liverpool and Galway left a vacancy in Galway, and O'Shea demanded that he should be asked. He also insisted that "Mr. Chamberlain fully supported him in this view, and considered Parnell shamelessly ungrateful for not proposing him for Galway". Parnell resisted again and again what I must call the blackmail of O'Shea. Through Mrs. O'Shea he suggested to her husband that he should take the pledge if he sat for Galway. "I went home," writes Mrs. O'Shea, "and on Parnell's return I told him of my failure. He only nodded, and, gazing into the fire, said quietly, 'It is no matter, Queenie. I was thinking this afternoon that we are giving ourselves much trouble about what really does not concern us. I'll run him for Galway, and'—with sudden fierceness—'I'll get him returned. I'll force him down their throats, and he can never again claim that I have promised and not performed. It will cost me the confidence of the

Party, but that much he shall have, and I shall be done with his talk of pledges.' "

And now I come into the narrative. I already had my strong suspicions that the incredible and the impossible was going to happen, and that Parnell would put the fellow forward for Galway. Parnell and I met outside the railings of Palace Yard, and there he made to me the startling announcement that he was going to put forward O'Shea for Galway. My blood ran cold. I saw the disastrous consequences which must follow, and my vision was more than justified by subsequent events. I pointed out the difficulties to Parnell, and did most of the talking. He then gave me a long list of the great services which O'Shea, in his private negotiations, had done for the Irish cause —services which were purely imaginary, except in so far as O'Shea negotiated the so-called Kilmainham Treaty— but of course these sophistries and false pretences did not bring any conviction to my mind, and I thought it was my duty there and then to adopt all means to save Parnell from this tragic and disastrous mistake.

My first act was to see Mr. Biggar. I found him in bed in the Hotel Metropole, and when he jumped out of bed clad in a strange garment like a bearskin, he looked so grotesque that his image at that moment remains with me still as the ridiculous part of a great tragedy. Biggar's reply was prompt and uncompromising. O'Shea must be opposed at all costs. We agreed that we should both go over to Dublin the next day to bring the situation before the attention of our Parliamentary colleagues. And so the next day we were on our way to Ireland on this fateful mission.

I met Mr. John Redmond on the platform at Euston. He had not then reached a position of any great importance, but I knew him to be a man of shrewdness. He

did not discuss the merits of the O'Shea candidature, but he uttered a word of caution as to the danger of opposing Parnell. On thinking the matter over I came to the more or less firm resolution that if Parnell's support to the candidature of O'Shea were publicly announced, it would be highly hazardous, if not disastrous, to oppose O'Shea. Up to that moment no public announcement of Parnell's attitude had been made, and it was possible that, in view of the remonstrances which I assumed would be sent to him from Ireland, Parnell might be induced not to proceed with the candidature.

Irish Members' Conferences

Biggar and I, when we landed at Kingstown, rushed for the *Freeman's Journal*, and there, in a brief leaderette, was found the fateful announcement that Captain O'Shea's candidature for Galway had the support of Mr. Parnell. Horrified and alarmed, I went with Biggar in the early morning hours to visit my chief colleagues. I found that they nearly all had been up through the long watches of the night, and when I arrived about seven or eight, had had only a few hours' sleep. Many of them bore in their faces and in their night clothes the too palpable marks of their long and anxious vigils. The only man who seemed doubtful of opposing O'Shea was William O'Brien, who, if I remember, described any collision with Parnell as "midsummer madness"; but Mr. Healy, in a state of frantic excitement, had no hesitation as to the course to adopt. He rushed into a torrent of eloquent denunciation, winding up with the statement that "Galway was to be sacrificed for . . ."—I will not conclude the sentence; I suggest the words of my colleague were Rabelaisian and only to be found in Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* and in the

pages of Mr. James Joyce. Ultimately, Healy said: "Biggar, will you go to Galway?" "Yes," said Biggar, without the least hesitation. The train for Galway was to start at nine o'clock. I thought this action was mad and disastrous—I think so still. I went to another member of the Party to try and induce him to join with me in an attempt to persuade Biggar and Healy not to start on this terrible adventure. I got no assistance, and Mr. Biggar and Mr. Healy started for Galway.

Never shall I forget the two or three days that followed the descent of Biggar and Healy on Galway. We all realized the fateful issues, and the world realized it quite as quickly. Correspondents began to make frantic enquiries from all parts of the world; the world, generally, felt more than the two gentlemen who entered upon this hazardous enterprise all the issues involved. It knew that the stakes were not lower than the leadership of Parnell and either the break-up or the success of the Parnellite Party in obtaining self-government for Ireland.

Member after member dropped into the consultations which were held in the Imperial Hotel, where some of us then lodged; our consultations lasted through all the hours of the day and almost through all the hours of the night, and were marked by a feverishness and black anxiety. We were especially alarmed by the silence of Parnell; he had exercised that curious power he had displayed for so many years of disappearing into thin air—invisible, unreachable. There was always an under-current of anxiety about Parnell; some of us, at least, knew the tragic history of his family, with its record of maniacs and suicides. There was enough in the appearance of Parnell himself, and especially in those blazing, enigmatic, red-flint eyes of his, to suggest that he had not escaped the hereditary taint, and many of us thought him quite capable at

any moment of finding a refuge from his troubles in suicide.

But at last an expedient was arrived at which proved to be successful. We agreed to send to him an address of undiminished confidence, and the address was signed by a large number of the members of the Irish Party, some of them in Dublin, the others reached by telegram. Mr. Maurice Healy refused to sign, on the natural ground that he could not go against Tim. This encouraging sign for Parnell of his being able to rely on his Party brought an immediate response. He informed us by telegram that he would be in Dublin on the following morning, and would immediately proceed to Galway. The question then raised was: who should accompany him on this fateful journey? I was strongly disinclined to do so. I did not approve, of course, of the candidature of Captain O'Shea; it had been thrust upon me against my protests, and I felt sure, as the former member of the town, who had received innumerable proofs of the people's confidence and affection, that I was not quite playing the game there.

The Journey to Galway

But Mr. Tim Harrington, then the powerful secretary of our organization, put it strongly to me that I might be of use in smoothing over the difficulties of Parnell, and that it was my duty to Ireland to do so. I felt the humiliation and the contradictoriness of my position; but when this appeal was made to me in the interests of the cause, I felt it my duty to take up the odious task of helping to see Parnell through his difficulty. So I met Parnell at the Broadstone station to accompany him to Galway. He had also with him as companions on this historic journey Mr. Sexton, Mr. James O'Kelly, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor.

Parnell was now doing perhaps as daring a thing as ever was attempted by a public man, but so far as I could see he remained perfect master both of his emotions and of the situation. Nothing could have better revealed the tremendous strength of the man; our conversation was discursive—it was on that occasion that he made that, to me, startling revelation of his return to the faith of his fathers. He had, indeed, in his youth been a member of one of the Synods of the disestablished Irish Church.

I was still a close friend of Mr. Healy, and I was sufficiently in sympathy with his antagonism to the candidature of Captain O'Shea to place me somewhat in his favour. I made a strong appeal to Parnell to be considerate in his treatment and in his language to him. Parnell said, with an easy smile, that of course he would use all the "resources of civilization"—using the historic phrase of Gladstone at the Guildhall in announcing Parnell's arrest—to produce an understanding. But he added that Mr. Healy had been trying to stab him in the back for years, and that he was doing so now, thinking the opportune hour had come.

At last we arrived at the station in Galway. I wish I could convey to the reader something of the appearance of this station as I recollect it. It was extraordinarily spacious for that of a town with a small population. At the end of it was a gigantic hotel, which was a monument and a tomb, for it had been created in the days when the dream was still vivid of Galway becoming the great international port between Europe and America. The station was, in that town of such sparse amusement and occupation, a sort of rendezvous. To meet the train—especially if anybody of note were expected—was one of the most exciting amusements of the people. But the spaciousness of the station was in ironic contrast with the fallen fortunes of the town,

and the hotel was mainly empty, and already had the appearance—in damaged furniture and broken china—of the fall of its fortunes.

On this particular day, however, the vast spaciousness was filled on the side on which the train came in; there were hundreds of people, and their demeanour was excited, fierce, hostile. There was palpable and even affrighting evidence of all the hostility which the candidature of O'Shea had excited. I found proof immediately of the hostility which I myself had excited—and this in a town where, a few weeks previously, everybody would have received me with a smile of welcome and admiration. I think somebody tried to knock off my hat with a stick; Parnell, with that magnanimity he could now and then display, rushed to my side and took me by the arm. In the distance was to be seen Captain O'Shea, showing great eagerness to approach and to welcome Parnell; the whiteness of his face was as palpable as that of his elaborate collar.

Opposition to Parnell

Parnell got rid of him as soon as possible. We walked along to the hotel, with the deafening noise of this mad crowd in our ears, and even when we got into the hotel there came echoes of the same tumult and disfavour. The Nationalists of the town had already nominated a local man—a Mr. M. A. Lynch—a fairly prosperous miller, a courageous and thoroughly honest man, and from the steps of the hotel we could hear his vigorous denunciation of O'Shea's candidature, and the peal upon peal of cheers with which these denunciations were received.

The first thing Parnell did was characteristic: he immediately retired to a bedroom, washed, combed his thin hair, and came down to the room in which we were all

assembled. He sat at the head of the table, and by his side stood both Biggar and Healy. Healy had to explain his position. On occasions of great excitement like this, Healy has almost always given way to his somewhat excitable temperament, and he has the gift of tears. He sobbed, and the tears streamed down his cheeks as he made his explanation; he was especially broken in voice when he repudiated the charge he understood had been made against him, that he was influenced in his action by personal feelings. Parnell and the men around the table—all of them hostile to Healy, personally and politically—remained silent; I broke the silence by saying, "I certainly do not believe that".

Then Biggar spoke. Never did this freakish, remarkable and fearless man display his qualities more conspicuously: he was perfectly cool; he was even smiling. Healy told immediately afterwards, with some amusement and as a display of Biggar's freakishness and courage, that when somebody of the town came to ask him how they should receive Parnell, Biggar, who was taking his breakfast and at the moment tapping the shell of his egg, said, "Mob him, of course", and proceeded to open the egg, and continue his hearty breakfast.

At one moment it looked as if Biggar were going to allude to what was in all our minds, to which nobody would have thought of referring. Healy sprang up and made as if to catch Biggar by the throat. Biggar was quite unperturbed, told Healy to sit down, and went on calmly with his explanation of his attitude; and he did not allude to the terms on which we all felt the seat had been sold to O'Shea.

And here I must interpose the remark that, though in the minds of Parnell's immediate colleagues the real meaning of the transaction was suspect, if not known, Captain

Peter Wright made a mistake, as I stated in my evidence in his case, in saying that the election was fought on the relations between Parnell and the wife of Captain O'Shea. I do not know that any of the townsmen really had ever heard of Mrs. O'Shea at that time; the burning hatred that was felt to O'Shea was on political and not personal grounds. We had for years in the House of Commons fought against the time-serving, the compromises, all the other elements of the old unawakened Ireland which were represented in what came to be called the nominal Home-Rulers. Many of them were office-seekers, all of them were tepid Nationalists; they all blocked the way to that great triumph of a forward and united movement which gave to us at this election 85 out of 103 members for Ireland. They also refused to join us in making that fierce war on the Liberal Ministry which we thought imposed upon us by successive Coercion Acts, by wholesale imprisonments, by trials with packed juries, by all the abominations which were associated with the old regime in Ireland; in those fierce days, he that was not with us was against us. It was part of our gospel that anybody who attempted to make peace between the Liberals and ourselves was really a traitor in the camp, and of all the men who had been associated with these attempts to deflect our hostility and was regarded as the arch-conspirator — especially with Mr. Chamberlain—to abate our wrath and weaken our attack, Captain O'Shea stood out prominently. It was the rotten politician and not the complacent husband against whom Galway, with all Ireland, stood up in revolt.

There did come to us, in those terrible days of feverish consultation to which I have already alluded, some vague rumours, through the office of the *Freeman's Journal*, of allusions by Biggar to that terrible suspicion which none of us wanted to face. We were relieved, however, by being

told that all Biggar had said was that it was time the Irish Party should cease to be governed by the O'Sheas: the use of the plural somewhat diminishing the venom of the assault.

The speeches of Biggar and Healy after our arrival amounted to a surrender, and it looked as if the day had been won for Parnell. But we had still to count on the people, and it was soon brought home to us that they were not as easily silenced as Parnell's mutinous followers.

Parnell's Dominating Personality

It was announced that there was a meeting waiting for us which we were expected to address. I have always regarded the proceedings of that meeting as bringing out more than almost any other incident in his life the tremendous courage and the dominating personality of Parnell. Yet there was nothing in the outward appearance of the meeting to bring out its tremendous importance. It was held in a small, rickety hall bearing palpable evidence of what was, alas! the universal feature of Galway life at that time—pretentious and hopeful beginning and gradual and despairing decay. Except for a few chairs on a small platform, there was not any sitting accommodation; the howling mob was there standing, fierce, impatient.

I took the chair, and got a rather mixed reception. And then Parnell spoke. I need not elaborate on the desperate issues he was fighting; on the essential and indefensible weakness of his position; on the terrible case, if all the truth were known, he had to meet, and that on the direct issue it was impossible for him to meet. Parnell, as I have more than once remarked, was usually rather a poor speaker—hesitating, costive, with unimpressive, lame sentences; but with his back to the wall now, he showed that

on occasion he could rise to heights of irresistible appeal. I do not remember that he ever even mentioned the name of Captain O'Shea; he gave a complete go-by both to the attacks that had been made upon that gentleman personally or to the replies that might be made. He did not repeat to them the palpably insincere claims of O'Shea's services to the cause which he had uttered in that momentous interview between him and me outside the House of Commons. The passage which swept away the audience and won the day was, so far as I can repeat the words, in something like these terms. Lifting his arm and stretching out his hand, he said, "I have Home Rule for Ireland in the hollow of my hand. If you dispute my decision now the English will say, 'Parnell's power is broken', and that will be the end of the Home Rule Movement."

You could almost feel the shudder of terror and of subjugation which swept through the audience, brought back from its howling fury to the sepulchral silence of a death-chamber.

There were several other speeches—eloquent speeches—persuasive speeches; a fine speech from Sexton, a fervid speech from William O'Brien; but it was Parnell's speech that won the day.

Mr. Thomas Marlowe's Account

I received a letter, which I think is worth publishing, from my old friend Thomas Marlowe (for so many years the editor of the *Daily Mail*) which gives a vivid account of this meeting—

"I have just read in *The Times* weekly edition a report of your evidence in Peter Wright's case. I can confirm your denial of Barry O'Brien's statement that you went to Ireland—and stayed in Dublin—for the purpose of opposing

O'Shea; and I can supplement your recollection as to what Biggar said about O'Shea, as I was present and you were not.

"You were asked whether Biggar told the electors openly that Parnell was giving the seat to O'Shea because Mrs. O'Shea was his mistress, and you replied that you did not think Biggar went so far as this, or that there was any record of his having done so. As to a record, no doubt you are right. I don't think the *Freeman* reported the statement, but it certainly was made at a public (open-air) meeting in the presence of Healy.

"I was then a medical student at Queen's College, Galway, and after lunch on a wet Sunday afternoon I heard that there was to be a political meeting in Eyre Square. This was the only exciting thing that had happened in Galway since my arrival there, so, of course, I went. I found Biggar and Healy standing on a cart in front of Mack's Hotel, with a crowd of some 150 or 200 people standing round it in the rain. Biggar made the allegation in question in the plainest language, and declared that nothing would induce him to be a party to such a transaction. Healy also spoke, in entire agreement with Biggar, but I cannot recollect that he repeated the statement as to Parnell's reason for putting O'Shea in.

"Parnell arrived in Galway not, I think, on the Monday, but on the Tuesday morning, some time before mid-day. He was accompanied by you, Campbell (who was, or had been, his secretary), J. O'Kelly, W. O'Brien, T. Sexton, and one or two others. I am not sure if Dillon was there. On the steps of the Railway Hotel I met Redmond M'Donagh, who whispered to me—'There is to be a private meeting at the Young Ireland Hall. If you go there at once you will hear everything.' So I went there at once, and got a front seat. Some time passed before proceedings began. Someone asked, 'Where is the Chief?' It was explained that he was at lunch, a reply that was not considered adequate, in this critical moment of Irish history. A very old man sitting beside me stood up and put a question to you. He asked, 'Why did you not return thanks for your election?' —you having been elected Member for Galway shortly

before, and, I think, for the Scotland Division simultaneously. Your reply, the words of which I remember quite clearly, was to the effect that the exigencies of your employment had prevented you from coming to Galway to return thanks, but you had asked Redmond M'Donagh to do so on your behalf.

"Parnell on his arrival was very coldly received. He spoke briefly and coolly. He said, 'I have Home Rule for Ireland in the hollow of my hand. If you dispute my decision now, the English will say, "Parnell's power is broken", and that will be the end of the Home Rule Movement.' Sexton followed, but without making any impression. Biggar was more subdued than on Sunday, and did not repeat his accusation. Healy said, 'I will never sit on the same green benches with that man' (O'Shea), and burst into tears. The incident to which you allude, of his threatening to throttle Biggar, entirely escaped me. O'Brien made a frantic speech, appealing for loyalty to Parnell, and it was this speech which produced the first indication of any feeling favourable to Parnell. O'Brien did not sit down until the meeting was clearly all but unanimous in accepting the nomination of O'Shea."

Mr. Lynch was induced to withdraw his candidature, but he had already been nominated. All the other members of the Party, except myself, returned immediately to Dublin. Somehow or other I felt that I had still to see the job through, that Parnell required the assistance of my once great authority in the town; and I had also a dim feeling that he required my companionship—always, I may say, I think, welcome to him—in the hour of travail through which he was passing.

Biggar, never to be deflected from his iron purpose, at the last moment made a strong attempt to induce me to leave Parnell, or, of course, as he put it, to leave O'Shea, for whom his contempt was infinite, and to return with him and the rest to Dublin. I thought this would have been a mean desertion of Parnell, and I refused. I do not know

whether it was that particular act or my general guilt, in his eyes, of not approving or supporting his descent on Galway, that made Biggar a bitter and secret enemy of mine for years afterwards. At a very critical hour in my own history he gave me a deadly stab. I never spoke to him again.

The last time I saw him was at a meeting of the Irish Organization in Great Britain, of which I was the President and he the Treasurer. I did not speak to him then, but I could not help noticing what I thought was a new and curious expression on his face—of mildness and something even like appeal. It was an unusual expression on that strong face, and I was rather tempted to go up and shake him by the hand in testimony of the close of our quarrel, but I did not do so. He was found dead in his bed the following morning. He lived in lodgings somewhere in Brixton, and in his last, as in all the other hours of his life, he was not without female companionship.

O'Shea elected, February 11, 1886

On the polling day Parnell and I had been equally busy in seeing that people went to the poll to vote for O'Shea. The evening we spent quietly together. I could not help noticing that Parnell was in a specially joyous mood. I could see that the victory he had attained with such difficulty had for the moment exorcized the terrible spectre which was always before him. He was easy, talkative even, lolling comfortably in his arm-chair while he smoked a small cigar. He never was able to smoke anything but a small cigar, and very few of those.

We then began to speculate about the future of Ireland, and one of the questions we discussed was whether absolute separation for Ireland was a possibility at any time in the

future. It was perhaps part of this easy certainty which his escape from such terrible risks had produced in his mind, but he spoke of that dream of so many Irishmen without any disapproval. Whenever I had heard him discuss the question before he had always pointed out that the peculiar geographical conditions in Ireland made anything like armed insurrection almost an impossibility. He debated it always with the detachment and frigidity of a soldier strategist considering war conditions. He did not discuss the question in that spirit now, but he did make an observation that rather struck me, first as a revelation of his inner aspirations, and, secondly, as an indication of his state of mind. "Leave that to me," he said, with a self-confident smile. And so we left it.

I should finish the story of Galway and Captain O'Shea. The very look of the man told the enormous change that had been made in his fortunes by the publicity of the campaign for his representation of Galway. It is a law of social life in England—perhaps in every country—that the charges against a man, however widespread in private circles, are disregarded until these things are brought to the light of day by public trial or by such incidents as those of the Galway election. There was undoubtedly an entire change in the atmosphere of the House of Commons towards O'Shea. His wit, his good humour, his suave manners, had made him not a popular personality, but certainly not a repellent member of the House. There was a general uneasy impression that he had purchased his seat in Galway at a price which no man of honour would pay, and the more or less detached air which he wore, his silence, and his general absence from his seat in the House of Commons, increased the sense of his being an isolated and not respected figure.

He had found out by this time the bitter fruits of that

election to the House on which he had, as has been seen, so pertinaciously insisted. The introduction of Home Rule by Gladstone, and the disappearance in consequence from Gladstone's Cabinet of Mr. Chamberlain—whom Captain O'Shea was justified in regarding as his chief friend and backer—had placed him in a difficult position. If he voted against the Bill, he made an enemy of Gladstone; if he voted for it he made an enemy of Chamberlain. As has been seen, his secret ambition had always been to be created Chief Secretary for Ireland, which was a job that would make an especial appeal to a man of his temperament; for one thing it carried a considerable salary. It would have placed him in control of all the secret wires by which the administration in Ireland had been pulled, and it would have given him considerable power and position—in short, it was just the kind of thing he would regard himself as especially fitted for and as especially fitted for him. On balancing the probabilities he would have seen that there would have been some likelihood of Mr. Chamberlain being able to exercise his influence for so constant a supporter in the Ministry that would follow that of Gladstone.

These hopes, if entertained, were dashed to the ground. Under the circumstances, Captain O'Shea took the course of abstaining from the final vote on Gladstone's Bill. His political life, so far as Ireland at least was concerned, was over; even Parnell could not venture upon a second attempt to force him down the throats of the electors of Galway. At the moment, therefore, he disappears from the House of Commons, but, as my readers know, we are not done with him, for he will make a reappearance in the fortunes of the Irish Party very soon again, and very disastrously.

Parnell in the House

While I am on Parnell and the Irish members, I must take note of a remarkable feature during the fateful debates on the Home Rule Bill. Everybody in the House by this time had realized that the astounding transformation of English Parliamentary opinion with regard to Ireland had mainly been the work of Parnell, and that it was his leadership which had created the powerful and irresistible weapon that forced Home Rule upon the assembly. It was one of the greatest hours of his life; yet a vainer man or a weaker man might have given the House evidence of the inner triumph in his own breast that such an astounding victory might well have created, but this was not Parnell. He usually sat in a somewhat conspicuous position on the third bench below the gangway on the Opposition side, but even there he did not ordinarily take the first seat—that was occupied usually by either Mr. Sexton or Mr. Healy. His usual place was on the third seat, but during these Home Rule debates he deliberately chose an obscure seat—he sat close to the door of the House, among what I may call a ruck of members on the second bench of seats, a spot which he could occupy without being seen, at least immediately, by many members of the House.

His dress, which had been steadily becoming shabbier, seemed shabbier than ever, and it was of a rather coarse tweed. From all appearances he might have been a member for a rustic constituency, nameless and voiceless. When he did speak, however, he spoke clearly, coldly, effectively, and he gave what I will call hearty support to the Bill. He expressed on some points his dissent from its provisions, especially with regard to finance. I have already told of the strong collision between him and Gladstone on that part of the Bill. On the other points which had been forced into

prominence during the debates, and especially on the retention or exclusion of the Irish members, he expressed himself quite impartially, and was ready for either the one solution or the other, as the majority of the House might decide. In short, he made a frank, dexterous, and reasonable speech. At this time he might do as he liked, because we knew that politically he would not do us wrong, and, apart from his political degeneration in the embarrassment that was to send him to his grave, he was a leader who, notably by his own example, kept his party of poor men unblemished, untarnished, unpurchasable, one and all.

CHAPTER VI

"Black Michael"—Equator under the ice—Lord Salisbury as chemist—Morley's allegory—Redvers Buller for Ireland—The "Plan of Campaign"—Goschen's financial triumph—Lord Randolph's nervousness.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL moved, without any friction, and with the full assent of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, into the position of Leader of the House. He justified this sudden eminence by his patience and skill, good temper and assiduity. The House, which apparently had escaped Ireland by the great Unionist majority, found that spectre once more facing it. Mr. Balfour was a Member of the Government, but not yet a Member of the Cabinet—his time was coming, but it had not yet come. The difficult office of Chief Secretary for Ireland was given to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had already had some experience in that office. This is the place to attempt something like a portrait of this very remarkable and powerful figure in the House of Commons for many years.

Portrait of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach

His nick-name of "Black Michael" gave a very good indication of his personal appearance and of his character. He was very tall; he was very thin; he wore a moustache and beard, and had a good head of hair, all black; but the appropriateness of the epithet was due quite as much to his mental as to his physical characteristics. His manner was icily cold, and when he spoke you would imagine that he had icy self-control. As a matter of fact, he was one of the most hot-tempered and irritable of men, and when he

lost his temper his language was that of the bargee. One of the many stories told about him was that when a somewhat fussy member of the lower branch of the legal profession tried in an interview to make some objections to the Budget he had just brought in, the unfortunate man was driven pell-mell out of the room, being addressed by his Parliamentary leader as a "damned pettifogging solicitor". On another occasion, when the Speaker of the day refused a closure or some other motion for which "Black Michael" was responsible, it was reported of Hicks-Beach that as he passed by the Speaker's chair he said in an audible whisper: "What will this damned . . . [I must leave a blank here] do next?"

Though he wore glasses, and at one time was so threatened with loss of sight that he had to resign office, his eyes could blaze. He was not a man of distinguished mind, but he had a very clear and composed delivery, knew all the expressions of Parliamentary life from long years of experience and of office; and, with a pedigree extending back to ages of squirearchy and the tenure of the same property, he was a very worthy and faithful representative of the Party to which he belonged.

Of course, nobody could be more hopeless from our point of view as Chief Secretary, and we made war on him immediately. However, at first, Parnell sought the road of conciliation. Things had gone very badly with Ireland. There was a considerable reduction in agricultural prices, and the old policy of many centuries of evictions for non-payment of impossible rents became very active. Parnell sought to meet the situation by a remedial Land Bill. He urged the Bill in a speech of studied moderation; it was supported by Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt, but Lord Hartington and the Government resisted it and it was rejected.

The session was, on the whole, rather dull and uneventful, and attention was immediately transferred from its floor to our side, for on October 2 Lord Randolph Churchill made a speech which attracted a great deal of attention. It was liberal in tone, and indeed some Liberals criticized it as having been stolen from the Liberal programme by an unscrupulous time-server.

Lord Randolph's Golden Hour

A remarkable thing about the speech, however, was its unbounded effect of effacing the figure of Lord Salisbury. This was really Lord Randolph's golden hour, and, though he did not know it himself, it was his last hour also. His contemporaries remember the retiring and almost hermit-like habits of Lord Salisbury. Though in private life, I believe—I never exchanged a word with him—he could be an agreeable and of course an interesting conversationalist, he did not seek otherwise either the companionship or conversation of his fellow-men. He had a chemical laboratory in his house at Hatfield, and there it was understood he spent many happy and tranquil hours in the study of scientific experiments, and in seclusion from his fellow-men.

I was told by a man who used to travel with him in the same carriage from Hatfield to St. Pancras that he always seated himself in a corner, buried himself in a book, and did not exchange a word with any of his fellow-passengers. Finally, he was in the House of Lords, and the House of Lords was steadily even then losing its influence in public affairs. On the other hand, on the great and echoing floor of the House of Commons, Lord Randolph, daring, picturesque, a true and attractive political adventurer, appealed to the whole country. If he had realized

all the dominations which this position gave him, he would have known that another year or two would have enabled him to bundle Lord Salisbury out of the Premiership. He was not a man to be restrained from asserting any position he desired by the ordinary delicacies and hesitations of social life.

The campaign in the country was meantime very active on both sides. Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley had an easy task in contrasting the new pronouncements of Lord Randolph Churchill with the old. There is one passage in a speech from Mr. Morley which I am tempted to quote.

Adverting to the moral of a speech of Lord Randolph, "that statesmen must change their minds according to circumstances", Mr. Morley said that if such evolutions were politics, "I declare quite sincerely that I would rather be a highwayman than a politician. A highwayman has more exercise; he has more open air; he keeps better hours, and is treated quite as respectably. If they propose real reforms of course we shall accept them; but, depend upon it, the gushing spring of Tory reform will not be very long before it runs dry. You will not get a bounteous affluence of fresh water into the Tory pump by the simple act of fitting it with a brand-new Radical handle, kindly lent for the occasion by a friend from Birmingham."

Sir William Harcourt, answering Lord Randolph Churchill's claim that he was consistent because he changed his view with changing circumstances, commented: "And no doubt that was perfectly true, and true for the same reason for which it is true that if a man calls *both* heads and tails in playing at pitch-and-toss, he is pretty sure to be right in one of his guesses. The Tories, without the Liberal Unionists, were like an empty sack—they could not stand upright."

Sir Redvers Buller in Ireland, November 1886

A curious incident in the Irish situation was that of the despatch of Sir Redvers Buller, the well-known soldier, to Ireland to make enquiries as to the situation there. The report must have been a bit of a shock for the Government, for Sir Redvers strongly denounced the landlords, who were acting without consideration for the difficult circumstances of their tenants. This was friendly, but again some error arose as to the mind of the Government when they removed from the Under-Secretaryship of Ireland Sir Robert Hamilton, who had served under Spencer and Morley, and was credited with strong Home Rule sympathies.

Meantime Ireland was, as so often had been the case, taking her own course in entire independence of the intrigues in Parliament and the dissensions between the different sections of the Liberal Party. To meet the campaign of eviction on the part of the landlords, the tenants were urged by Mr. O'Brien to take up their own defence. Under the Plan of Campaign, as it was called, the rents were not sent to the landlords, but to a central fund, to await delivery to the landlords when proper action had been taken. There was immediately, from the Hartingtons and Goschens and the other Liberals of that tribe, a cry for Coercion.

While the Government were face to face with this brand-new and most menacing difficulty in Ireland, there fell upon the world a big bombshell, when the almost incredible news came that Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned his position in the Government.

I must refer my readers to the various events which led up to this extraordinary development. It was known to everybody in the House of Commons—friend or foe of

Lord Randolph—that he had the utmost contempt for his colleagues; that he regarded the Party majority as decided by the votes of utterly commonplace and unintelligent men; and, so far as we could gather, the chief objects of his contempt were Mr. W. H. Smith and Sir Richard Cross. The *mot* was passed all round that he always spoke of these gentlemen as Marshall and Snelgrove. I do not seek to penetrate the mystery of Lord Randolph's heart in making such comments. He was a man of always irritable nerves; this irritability was undoubtedly increased by his excessive cigarette-smoking and his overwork. There were innumerable instances of how he allowed this irritability to get over all the counsels of regard for himself or his position.

There was a story current of his having attacked, almost with brutality, a great figure who exercised immense influence in the Press, who could do a great deal to make or mar his career. In short, I think he could sometimes be extraordinarily rude.

Lord Randolph Resigns the Chancellorship, December 23, 1886

The resignation of Lord Randolph shook the Government to its foundations, and there were even some days when all seemed to be lost. Lord Hartington refused to join; Mr. Chamberlain, of course, could not yet join. The one man who did not occur at once to everybody, and especially to Lord Randolph Churchill himself, was Mr. Goschen. "I forgot Goschen," is a phrase that, rightly or wrongly, is attributed to Lord Randolph after Goschen had filled the vacancy which in his calculations he had thought could not be filled.

There was no doubt that Goschen added enormously

to the strength of the Government. He had begun public life as a Liberal, but his Liberalism was found to be merely skin-deep. He belonged to a great financial family; he was a great economist; by temperament and by conviction he was reactionary—pretty much on the same lines as Robert Lowe in a previous generation. On the Irish question especially, he was quite as hostile to Home Rule as any member of the Tory Party. At first sight, if one described him, especially physically, he might be expected to have been one of the most ineffective of Parliamentary figures. He had an ungainly figure; he had a raucous voice—in my wrath of olden days I used to compare it to the croaking of the frogs I had heard at nights in California. His gestures were at once violent and graceless. Though he came from more than one generation of Lutheran preachers and was himself a professed Anglican, he bore unmistakable marks of his Jewish origin in his physique.

Yet one has to acknowledge that, in spite of these palpable deficiencies, he was a very great Parliamentary figure. His debating powers were great; he had great Parliamentary courage; and more than once he was able to restore the fortunes of his own party in a debate.

His financial experience made him ideal as a Chancellor of the Exchequer; he could handle figures with an ease denied to poor Lord Randolph Churchill; and in a few weeks' time it was quite evident that the blow which Lord Randolph may have thought would have brought the Government to its knees really brought *him* to destruction, to madness, and to early death. I may say that Mr. Goschen's elevation to the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer gave me one of the most satisfactory successes in my Parliamentary life. I went down to Liverpool to take part in the election when he stood for the Exchange Division of Liverpool, with the certainty in my mind that

we were fighting a forlorn hope. I worked, however, night and day, made innumerable speeches, visited the sick and almost the dying, and dragged some of them to the poll. Goschen's opponent was a gentleman—Mr. Ralph Neville —who afterwards attained to high judicial position, but at this period was known only as a young and not very prominent barrister. In the end I could scarcely believe my ears when I was told that we had beaten Mr. Goschen by seven votes.

Mr. W. H. Smith as Leader of the House, January 4, 1887

Lord Randolph Churchill, however, did not give up hope immediately; he had still in the Tory Party a good many friends who had faith in him. Mr. Mattinson, a clever young lawyer, once put the case of the supporters of Churchill in the phrase, "Wait till we get into Opposition, and then we will see who is the great figure in the Tory Party." He had also a warm friend in Mr. E. J. Jennings, a very able man and a very able journalist, who had returned to England after he had played a great and historic part, as the editor of a newspaper in New York, in breaking down the once omnipotent sway of Boss Tweed and the other corrupt leaders of the democracy of New York.

For a while Lord Randolph Churchill watched his opportunities, willing to wound and yet afraid to strike. Gradually he came to the humble position—at least, so it was reported—of being ready to rejoin the Government he had left, but in a position much subordinate to that which he had held before. The leadership of the House by Mr. W. H. Smith, who had no Parliamentary abilities, but was a plain, honest, business man, only helped to mark the enormous weakening of the Ministry. Lord Randolph once signified his estimate of W. H. Smith by making the comic

proposal, after Gladstone had made a series of devastating speeches in the country, that Mr. Smith should be sent up to answer him.

But there was one thing which Lord Randolph Churchill entirely misunderstood: first, his physical strength, and secondly, his power of carrying on for an indefinite period a single-handed warfare against the very powerful influences which were arrayed against him. His son has described his position well in these words:

"During the rest of his public life he encountered nothing but disappointment and failure. First, while his health lasted, the political situation was so unfavourable that, although his talents shone all the brighter, he could effect nothing. Then, when circumstances offered again a promising aspect, the physical apparatus broke down. When he had the strength, he had not the opportunity. When opportunity returned, strength had fled. So that at first, by sensible gradations, his political influence steadily diminished; and afterwards, by a more rapid progress, he declined to disease and death."

I have already mentioned the evidences of acute nervousness which I had discovered in him one day when I sat beside him in the Smoke Room. Somehow or other, men who are nervous always appear to me—it may be my imagination—to show more of the whites of their eyes than on other occasions; and it looked to me at the time as if the eyes of Lord Randolph were all white.

CHAPTER VII

Lord Dunkellin as romantic libertine—Clanricardes, father and son—Landlord and tenant's daughter—Veiled prophet of Connaught—A solitary at eighty—Balfour for Ireland—Our mocking scorn—"Remember Mitchelstown."

"ALL the politics of the moment", said Lord Salisbury, "were summarized in the word 'Ireland'," and so it proved to be. A new and violent stage was reached in March 1887, when the Government announced the production of a new Coercion Bill. The fight between the tenants and the landlords had been aggravated, as I have said, both by the action of the tenants in organizing the Plan of Campaign and by the landlords in insisting upon their right to evict.

Lord Clanricarde and his Sons

At this crisis there emerged into the light of day one of the most peculiar, eccentric, and almost incredible figures in Irish history. This was the Marquis of Clanricarde. He had succeeded to the title and estates through the death of his elder brother, Lord Dunkellin. I saw Lord Dunkellin once; he was engaged in herding the tenants of his father's estate into wagonettes in which they were drawn to vote—of course, in presence of the landlord and under the threat of eviction and ruin if they did not give the vote he desired.

I can see his figure quite plainly still; he looked exactly like a man taken from the lurid pages of Samuel Warren, who then was able to stir the blood of readers by vivid descriptions of the splendid vices of the aristocracy. In one

of his tales—which I still remember across a chasm of more than sixty years—there was a very graphic description (I think the title of the story was "The Man about Town") in which by steps the gradual descent to disease and death of the figure was depicted. In spite of the moral condemnation which the author found it necessary to pass on the libertinage of his hero, there was underneath a tone of something like obsequious admiration.

Lord Dunkellin seemed to be just the man who could stand as model for such a character. He was very well and, indeed, almost too well dressed; he wore a soft hat with a brilliant many-coloured band around it; he had a single eye-glass. The face was not ill-humoured, but it was covered with blotches that told their too palpable tale of such over-indulgence as had caused the ruin of Mr. Warren's "Man about Town". A short time afterwards he was compelled to walk from the racecourse of Newmarket some distance, in the absence of a carriage; this brought on a bad attack of gout, which his ruined constitution made him unable to resist.

I heard the story at the time—and I believe it was true—that when, in answer to his persistent question as to how long he had to live, the doctor gave him two hours, he asked his valet to wind up his musical box, and to its strains he took his flight from this world.

I yield to the temptation, as I am for the moment trying to describe the kind of people that then played a large part in the rule of Ireland, to say something of his father —whom also I saw many times in the days of my youth. He was a tall, thin, very distinguished-looking man; he had a long, pallid face, high cheek-bones, short upper lip. The bloodlessness of the face suggested the comparison, then popular with regard to him, of a death's-head. He was omnipotent, of course, among his tenantry, the lives

of all of whom depended on his undisputed will. He had married the daughter of Lord Canning, the son of the great George Canning, and for a time a very brilliant and benign ruler of India. But the relations between the husband and wife were notoriously not very happy. A lady who had been the mistress of Lord Clanricarde was tried on a charge of attempting the poisoning of her children; she was acquitted, but Clanricarde's career was ended.

Clanricarde's Poor Claimants

I have heard stories of the doings of this formidable, somewhat old-fashioned type of Irish landlord, including a long and fruitful intrigue with the very beautiful daughter of one of his tenants. There were claimants to his parenthood in many instances; one, a great social figure in London, well known to Labouchere and all the bloods and wits of that period, played a very popular social part. Others of his alleged offspring were less happy. I saw one man who claimed to be a son of his, in rags and in apparent semi-starvation, selling newspapers in Regent Street.

The Marquis of Clanricarde with whom I am now dealing had no resemblance whatever either to his father or to his brother. Labouchere knew him when they were both in the Diplomatic Service, and when Lord Canning Burke had a very small allowance: the costly pleasures of his father and his brother did not leave much money for a younger son. It was possibly these uncertain fortunes that developed in him a quality which became more prominent than any other in his character—the taint of avarice. "Labby" used to tell amusing stories of his being called in as arbitrator between the young aristocrat and his then regnant mistress, and of "Labby" having to decide the

question of accounts between the favours of the lady and the parsimony of the lover.

It is a curious indication of the depths of political impotence to which Ireland was then reduced that Viscount Canning Burke was able to get returned for Galway; I do not know that he even took the trouble of visiting the place. Of all parts of the world, the one he seemed most determined never to visit was the ancestral castle of his family and the broad estates from which he received his large annual income. It was said that even when his mother died he did not take the trouble to go over and attend the funeral. Letters of all kinds were constantly being sent to him asking for reduction of rent, for subscriptions to local charities, etc. He had the same answer for all—absolute silence. His unfortunate agents, who had to obey his behests, always went in fear of their lives. One of them was assassinated as he was driving to church by the side of his wife, and the successor had to be guarded as abundantly as the Tsar of Russia.

There were all kinds of conspiracies among the tenantry: several murders took place and some executions; but the veiled prophet remained hidden from his subjects and his victims.

As a matter of fact, he lived in rooms of quite modest proportions in the Albany. One of Labouchere's favourite stories was that Lord Clanricarde sent a complaint to his landlord of the bad condition of his rooms, and gave it to be understood, however, that what he wanted was not the removal of the insanitary conditions, but a reduction of his rent.

Wealthy Landlord's Hand-me-downs

The story was current at the time—it was never proved or disproved—that among his other occupations was that

of financier of a well-known money-lender called Sanguinetti. He carried this avarice into all his life. I saw him once as he walked up the Albany, and then the look of his clothes—shabby, ill-cut—strengthened the story that he dressed only in second-hand garments, and that even these he did not discard until he had had them made over again. He had an extraordinary old-fashioned and rusty hat; he had a blue frock-coat a good deal too large for him.

I saw him a second time, and to my surprise, when I was dining with a friend at St. James's Club—he was sitting at the next table. He was then a very old man, upwards of eighty; and with his long white beard, his parchment complexion, his detached air, it looked really as if Father Time had walked into the dining-room. He never spoke to anybody, apparently, and nobody ever spoke to him.

To complete the story of the man, it must be added that he had a great deal of ability, very wide reading, and on all questions of art he was as fine an authority as any expert of Christie and Manson's. His squalid and dirty chambers were filled with most precious pictures; one of the best of them, I was told, was nailed against the back of one of the doors in his flat.

This was the man who emerged for a moment into the light of day. He was as much of a torture and a difficulty to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach as to his tenants. They had got to a point of such exasperation, and had organized themselves so well, that they resisted eviction and held out for days against all the military authorities. One house came to be known as Saunders' Fort, and there was a pitched battle around it for days. But the poor Chief Secretary was not anxious to employ the military and police forces in driving into the wilderness tenants whose inability to

pay was known to him, and whom no reasonable landlord would endeavour to evict.

Most of the landlords would probably have fallen in with the views of the Chief Secretary; but against him, and against all the forces of the world, this strange, old, white-bearded, pallid-faced, shabby, and—I am told—personally rather malodorous old man stood heroic in his obstinate fight against all the world. He made one of his very few appearances in the House of Lords; though a ghost from the past in appearance, there was nothing timid or abashed in his defence of his position. He made his speech, though the strain upon him was shown by the fact that in the middle of it he took some phial from his pocket and swallowed something—either medicine or brandy, nobody could tell.

Finally the difficulties of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach were increased by the fact that the dispensing power which he had tried to exercise was declared to be illegal by one of the Law Courts—in Ireland, reaction's final and most secure refuge in the war of the landlords against the people.

Mr. Balfour becomes Chief Secretary, March 5, 1887

This was the state of things when Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who had shown an irritability of temper in public (he was usually, as I have already said, composed, and his fierce rages found expression only in private life) that disclosed the strain upon his spirits and on his health, announced that he could not longer go on with the Chief-Secretaryship; his eyes gave him so much trouble that the possibility of semi-blindness was threatened.

And then the world was astounded by the news that his successor had been found in Mr. Arthur Balfour. There was a scream of mocking laughter from all parties (includ-

ing his own), but most of all from the Liberals and the Irish. It shows how, even after close observation of its members for many years, even that observant and usually penetrating Assembly can make a mistake as to the realities of one of its own figures. Up to that time the universal estimate of Mr. Balfour was that he belonged to that lackadaisical, willowy, and weak type of young man then a factor in the life of London.

I quote here, partly by way of showing how general and yet how false was the estimate of him at the time, something I wrote about him then:

"He had sat in Parliament since 1874; and though he was the nephew of the Marquis of Salisbury, he had not up to that moment ever made a speech which produced any impression upon the House of Commons. In the Parliament of 1880 he had joined fortunes to those of Lord Randolph Churchill . . . and with Mr. Warton he shared the labour of obstructing all Mr. Gladstone's proposals. But even in his obstruction there was a faint-heartedness and a want of tenacity that fitted in well with his appearance and repute. Mr. Balfour is a tall and very slight man. The neck is long, narrow, and as thin as that of a delicate girl. On the whole, the impression he would give to a stranger, who saw him for the first time and did not know him, would be that he was a more than usually mild member of the mild race of curates. . . . Sitting on his seat in the House with his rather long legs stretched out before him, he gives an impression of physical and mental lassitude that could never be associated with a vigorous policy or a firm character."

The discovery was made very soon that this was an entirely false estimate, and that behind all the slightness of figure, the negligent and detached air, and the halting speech there were iron resolution and indomitable courage. Both these qualities, as I think and probably as he now thinks, were entirely wasted; but for the moment they set

up against the powerful and illegal organizations in Ireland and the still very powerful Irish Party the most formidable antagonist they had yet encountered.

The Mitchelstown Shootings, September 9, 1887

It is too late in the day for me to indulge in any violent language against his regime, although there was scarcely any regime in modern Irish history that was more hated. It is well known that "bloody Balfour" was the epithet with which the Irish people expressed their estimate of Mr. Balfour and of Mr. Balfour's policy. All the military and police and other forces in Ireland knew that at last they had found a chief who would pause before no action which he thought necessary in the war to the death between him and the popular forces in Ireland. Member after member of the Irish Party was prosecuted and sent to gaol, and when they were in gaol were—contrary to the habits of most civilized countries of the world—treated as ordinary criminals with a plank as their couch and the semi-starvation diet of the gaol as their food.

It was on Mr. Balfour that the task was imposed of making the great retreat from the position of partial alliance and partial agreement with the Irish Party which had characterized the election of 1885; and Mr. Balfour had scarcely been in office when he had the heavy task of going back to the old and discredited policy of Coercion.

One of the incidents of the fierce war that now ensued between Ireland and Mr. Balfour came to be historic. There was a meeting at Mitchelstown in connection with the chronic Land question there; this meeting was quite legal; the police endeavoured to break it up. They were driven back to the barracks; they fired upon the meeting, and three persons were killed. The meeting was attended

by several English people, by Mr. Labouchere, the late Mr. John T. Brunner, both Members of Parliament; and by several other English ladies and gentlemen. Mr. Balfour threw the whole weight of his authority on the side of the police, and when a verdict of wilful murder was given against them by a coroner's jury he got the verdict quashed.

Mr. Gladstone was especially shocked by the occurrence, and said that "the deaths of three men in Mitchelstown remained as unavenged as if they had been three dogs". And Ireland found a bitter rallying cry: "Remember Mitchelstown!"

CHAPTER VIII

The Times bombshell—A Phoenix Park condonation—How I sensed a forgery—Parnell's poor defensive speech—Richard Pigott—*The Times* Commission—The three judges.

"The Times" Letters, April 18, 1887

NOW I come to one of the most dramatic incidents in the long struggle between the Unionist Government and the Liberal and Irish forces fighting for Home Rule. On April 18, 1887, the House of Commons was to vote on the Second Reading of Mr. Balfour's Coercion Bill. I was awakened early on the morning of that day—members who, like myself, were accustomed to all-night sittings were not expected to be early risers, and I was still in bed when the restless energy of Mr. W. T. Stead—then editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*—sent one of his young men to me with a copy of *The Times*; and, set forth with every method a newspaper can employ to display news and spread over several columns, with a leading article devoted to it, was the following document—

"15/5/82.

"Dear Sir,

"I am not surprised at your friend's anger, but he and you should know that to denounce the murders was the only course open to us. To do that promptly was plainly our best policy.

"But you can tell him and all others concerned that though I regret the accident of Lord F. Cavendish's death, I cannot refuse to admit that Burke got no more than his deserts.

"You are at liberty to show him this, and others whom

you can trust also; but let not my address be known. He can write to House of Commons.

"Yours very truly,
"Chas. S. Parnell."

This was indeed a thunderclap. For months it became the chief subject of newspaper and Parliamentary warfare. Its publication on this particular morning was evidently a deliberate choice because it undoubtedly helped the prospects of the Coercion Bill, the second reading of which was to be voted on at the day's sitting. The prospects of the Bill had not been particularly bright at the start. Mr. Balfour, who was new to his office and always very weak when it came to exposition and the setting forth of a number of facts, had confirmed the doubts and misgivings—even of his own Party—of his fitness for his new office by making an extremely ineffective speech. It was in coming to the rescue of his inefficient colleague that Mr. Goschen was able to display those supreme Parliamentary gifts which I have already noted. Undoubtedly his defence of the Bill was masterly, and produced a revulsion in its favour—a revulsion the more necessary as so many of the members even of the Tory Party felt some misgiving in the recollection of their old flirtations with the Irish Party, and then the open or implied hostility which many of their election addresses and placards, as I have already noted, indicated.

But this letter, which practically made Parnell guilty of connivance with the horrible murders in the Phoenix Park, was supposed to be a deadly blow in favour of Coercion, and might even have involved the trial of the Irish Chief on the charge of connivance with murder.

I had no special information with regard to this document. I was not and could not at that hour be in touch with Parnell; but I knew Parnell. Many years before, when he

was still a Parliamentary stripling and far from the great position he had attained and the great gifts he had shown, I was struck by a vein of caution in his mind which I had not realized. I saw him writing his signature on a sheet of paper which had been sent to him by an autograph hunter. To my astonishment he wrote his signature right at the top of the note-paper; I realized that the object was to prevent anything being written over the signature on that sheet of paper. This early evidence of his realization that even forgery might be added to the weapons used against him struck me very much. Apart from other reasons, that enabled me to make up my mind at once that this letter published by *The Times* over his signature was a forgery, and so I described it to the emissary of Mr. Stead.

Irish Members' Anxiety, April 18, 1887

It can be imagined in what state of excitement the House of Commons met that afternoon. The excitement and the apprehension were strongest of all among the Irish Party, and there was that peculiarity in the relations between them and their Chief which was calculated to raise their anxiety to the fever point. Parnell had begun to prolong for some time the long intervals between his appearances in the House of Commons—he would be away for days if not weeks together. For reasons that will now be appreciated he had taken every precaution possible to conceal his whereabouts from the world. So far as his colleagues were concerned, with the possible exception of his secretary, Mr. Henry Campbell, he might as well have lived in the moon.

The state we were in may, then, be well imagined when we had to begin the discussion on the Coercion Bill in the absence of Parnell and without even a message from

him. And this brought one of the most dramatic events I have seen in the House of Commons.

Sexton had been chosen to make the chief speech of our Party in opposition to the Bill. He usually spoke at considerable length, though in an impromptu reply he could be brief and crushing; but on this occasion he had to make a speech of some length. He got up in the same ignorance as to Parnell's attitude towards the letter in *The Times* as everybody else, which of course was a very great handicap; but, with his habitual self-possession and his command of glowing and telling language, he had riveted the attention even of the excited House, thinking, at the moment, of only one thing and that the one thing on which Sexton could not speak. He was actually in the middle of a sentence when Parnell came into the House, quietly, almost furtively, and went to that humble seat just close to the door of the House, where, as I have already said, he usually sat during the most momentous days.

He sat down next, I think, to Justin M'Carthy, and whispered to him that the letter was a forgery; the word was passed on with lightning speed. Sexton at the moment was describing the many mean and unscrupulous ways by which the Irish Party had been pursued by their political enemies; he came down on the word "forgery" with a crash, and at once the effect on the House was almost indescribable. Here at last the secret was out; here at last the problem that was stirring every member of the House to the depths. It was like a sudden crash of thunder and lightning in the middle of an already stormy sky. Cheer after cheer went up from the Irish members and from the Liberals, and the Tories sat dumb and dumbfounded.

If the Coercion Bill proposals had been put forward in good faith and independence on the impartial verdict of

the House, the vote on the Coercion Bill would have been then and there decided. But there were powerful political reasons why that question could not be decided on its merits. Anyhow, this denunciation of *The Times* letter was the beginning of one of the most rancorous and also one of the most dramatic episodes in the whole of the struggle between the Government and Parnell.

Curiously enough, at the start Parnell, instead of confirming the faith of the House in his innocence of the forged letter, disappointed his friends and rather encouraged his enemies. Instead of confining himself to a plain and bold denial of the genuineness of the letter, he went into a long and laboured analysis of the writing in which it was produced, pointing out that he never wrote a particular letter in this way or another in that. He spoke, indeed, as if he were simply a handwriting expert examining a document, and analysing it letter by letter. It was really one of the worst failures of Parnell in the House of Commons.

In the heat of the struggle over Coercion, for some months the question of this letter dominated all others. The debates upon it were hot, furious, and prolonged: one of the most curious examples in history of how a palpable forgery can influence great destinies.

Portrait of Richard Pigott, 1887

The author of the forgery was Richard Pigott. There was no man in Dublin, or, indeed, in Ireland, whose character was so well known. Almost the gutter boy that sold the halfpenny evening papers in the streets of Dublin could have told all that was necessary about Pigott's character. I knew him well; indeed, in my early days in Parliament, when it was necessary for me to do any

amount of work for almost any amount—however small—of pay, I had written a column weekly for him at the high price of 10s. an article. He had been for many years the proprietor of three weekly and unsuccessful papers in Dublin. The ground for all other parties was well covered in Ireland by other papers; Pigott took to himself the Fenian Party, then comparatively weak in Ireland, and guardedly he gave expression to their views.

He had some brilliant writers on the *Irishman*, the chief of these papers—notably Dr. Sigerson, a great Irish scholar, a professor, a man at once learned and a brilliant writer, but working—probably to save his professional position—more or less secretly and unknown to the general public. The most notable article he ever wrote was on the execution of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien in Manchester in 1867. I may say here parenthetically that the execution of these three men was practically the beginning of the modern Home Rule movement; it was certainly the beginning of the deeper spirit of nationality which had become submerged in me by my University life, where every country, and especially Greece and Rome, were studied—except Ireland. I can still see myself walking down to my office through Nassau Street when an early edition of the evening paper announced the execution, and the shock it gave me still remains fresh. It had a similar effect on all the young men of Ireland. Mighty processions of mourning and indignation were formed all through Ireland; I saw some of them passing my newspaper office, and they were a very imposing sight.

Coercion was in full blast in Ireland at the time; a Tory Government was in power, and they were frightened by these tremendous series of demonstrations which, if the Irish had had arms in their hands, might have led to an open insurrection. The leaders who organized the pro-

cessions and who expressed the national passion were prosecuted. I was present as a young reporter at the trials. The men who were regarded as the chief culprits were Mr. A. M. Sullivan, the editor of another Nationalist weekly, a brilliant orator and a veteran politician; and Richard Pigott. They were convicted, of course; every jury in a political case at that period of Irish history and long afterwards was packed. Pigott was sentenced to twelve months' and Sullivan to six months' imprisonment.

I remember that the chief article in evidence against Pigott was that in the *Irishman* by Sigerson; it was one of the most powerful articles I ever read; its power was so great that the Attorney-General, who was prosecuting, paid a tribute to its intense effectiveness, coupling that with the statement that the more it was effective the guiltier it was and the greater the necessity for the punishment of the newspaper proprietor who had published it. This accounted for the longer sentence of imprisonment given to Pigott than to Sullivan.

It is probable that Pigott was always hard up. A look at the man betrayed his essentially epicurean character; he was rather stout, and had a full, rather bloated, face; he looked, as he was, a thorough sensualist; and perhaps this impression was increased by his constant wearing of a single eye-glass.

I don't know whether all the stories are correct of the devious, sometimes even terrible, means by which he tried to find the money for the indulgence of his tastes. It was whispered during the Parnell Commission that one of his means of living was the sale of indecent books and photographs; I don't answer for the other statement, that among his best customers for these choice articles were clergymen —mainly, I regret to say, of the Anglican Church. He was also a confirmed begging-letter writer. As will be seen,

these letters of his were used at the tragic moment when he had to appear in the witness-box during the Parnell Commission.

"The Times" Commission, 1887

There was another and as grave a charge against him. He had raised public subscriptions, in one form or another, for the Fenians, their defence in court, and the succour of the wives and children whom their imprisonment left penniless: the charge was that he had regularly embezzled the funds and devoted them to his own purposes. A man connected with his office was one evening attacked and severely wounded and almost killed; and such was the suspicion of Pigott that many believed he resorted to this method of getting rid of an inconvenient witness to his defalcations.

It was a startling revelation to Pigott that the credulity of *The Times* and the other enemies of the Irish Party offered an easy and even a luxurious method of making large sums of money. He was to present to *The Times* forged letters which would implicate Parnell, and the letter in *The Times* was one of the first products of this new, unexpected, and opulent method of raising money.

The conduct of the Government in face of this new crisis was not very straight. Mr. Smith created a good deal of ridicule and suspicion by revealing that he had been in communication with his old friend Mr. Walter, the proprietor of *The Times*. Of course there was nothing unnatural in the head of the chief news-distributing agency of the country, as Mr. W. H. Smith was, being in touch with the head of the then most powerful newspaper in England; but communications between the two at a moment when this conspiracy against the character and

the life of Parnell and his party was being concocted naturally gave rise to a great deal of violent comment.

Time after time attempts were made to force the Government into an impartial examination of the authenticity of the letter. The Government, perhaps knowing the weakness of their position in the matter, and anxious to prove against the Irish Party a connivance with the violent revolutionary and sometimes sanguinary movements in Ireland during those years of fierce struggle, made up their minds to escape from the narrow and perilous ground of the forged letter, and to widen the enquiry into an exposure or examination of the various organizations in Ireland, and of the many sanguinary crimes that had been committed, in the hope that if they failed on the letter they might succeed on the more general indictment.

The end of it was that a Commission of three Judges, every one of them a sound anti-Home Ruler, was appointed to survey the whole history of the fierce ten years of the Parnellite Movement.

Lord Justice Hannen had been President of the Divorce Court, and was a very fine Judge. He was a stately man, dignified,—except now and then when he displayed a certain irritability of temper,—good-hearted, and patient. Lord Justice Smith was more or less a mere lawyer, but a very great lawyer, and, I was told afterwards by those on the inside, most careful in scrutinizing all the evidence which was supposed to bear against us. Mr. Justice Day, the third Judge, was a very peculiar person. He had the face of an undertaker, black hair, black whiskers, black eyes, and the solemnity of an owl. He was an ardent Roman Catholic. All I had heard of his previous performances as a Judge had drawn in my mind a very sinister picture. I was told that he was the severest Judge on the Bench of the Criminal Court.

In the North of England and among the mining population, courtship is rough, and there are frequent charges of rape. A poor, unfortunate boy convicted of such an offence received a sentence of twenty years' penal servitude from this gloomy fanatic; and, to add to the horror of the situation, this severe Judge, who had sentenced a mere youth to death in life for a long term of penal servitude, used to visit the unfortunate youth in his cell and join in prayers with him. He was the deadliest form of fanatic, and really belonged to the more ancient days and ideas of the Inquisition, rather than to those of to-day.

These were the gentlemen into whose hands the fate of Parnell and our Party was entrusted.

CHAPTER IX

The Times Commission—Webster and Russell, Reid and Asquith—A procession of informers—Le Caron the spy—Parnell's mystery bag—The witnesses—Pigott unmasked—Russell's seven-day speech—Government unrepentant.

"The Times" Commission begins

THE scene that displayed itself in the early days of this great State Trial—for such it was—was certainly impressive. Everybody felt its solemn and historic importance. There was a tremendous array of counsel on both sides. *The Times* was allowed to have the services of Sir Richard Webster, the Attorney-General, who then was regarded as one of the most consummate advocates at the Bar. He was not an intellectual, or, so far as his politics were concerned, an intelligent man. He belonged by instinct and by training to the narrow section of the Tory Party. He was an ardent Churchman, and, having a rather beautiful and well-trained voice, he sang in the choir of his church almost all the Sundays of his life. He was personally a thoroughly decent fellow, thoroughly honest, thoroughly thick-headed. He carried in his springy walk a reminder of his days as a young and successful athlete; fair-haired and handsome, his face, however, had the portentous solemnity of the typical ultra-respectable man of an English community. From the first to the last he had the unconscious partisanship and impenetrability of a thoroughly narrow-minded man.

The chief man in opposition to him was Sir Charles Russell. Russell was as typically Irish as Webster was

typically English, but Irish of the Ulster type. He was as ardently Roman Catholic as Webster was Anglican. Among the advocates of his time he towered high above them all. He was a poor Parliamentarian, and never made a really successful House of Commons speech; he was helpless and hopeless on the platform, but seemed transformed into another individual when he was in Court. There was a suggestion of gigantic strength and perfect and indisputable mastery of the personalities—big and little—around him. At this time his hair was white, and he had a handsome face with well-formed and strong features, and a manner that was masterful and almost dictatorial. His heart was thoroughly in the business, for he was—in spite of his long residence and great fame in England—an ardent Irishman.

I once heard him make a speech in the famous Tranby Croft case, a case in which a great soldier was tried for his honour and position on a question of cheating at baccarat; a case also in which the late King (then still Prince of Wales) had to give evidence. I gave my impression of Russell's style of speech in that tragic case by borrowing a metaphor taken from my early youth. They were at the time building a new bridge across the Shannon, the great river that runs through my native town of Athlone, and I remember remarking, as the men were engaged in pile-driving, how the resounding echo came to my ears a few moments after the blow had been struck. So I thought of Russell—his blows were like those of the pile-driver.

By the side of Russell in our defence were two notable but not yet eminent young lawyers; he who was afterwards Sir Robert Reid, and later Lord Loreburn, brought to the case extraordinarily great industry and great mastery of facts; but, though he was the senior somewhat

in years and in position, he did not shine as much as a slight, clean-shaven, fair-haired young man, looking as young as though he was still an undergraduate, and only beginning to be known as a recently returned Member of Parliament. This was the gentleman who afterwards was Prime Minister of England, H. H. Asquith, who died Lord Oxford.

The Briefs for the Irish Party

There were some Irishmen who were also joined to the defence, but there was one notable exception which excited a great deal of attention, and which was perhaps the explanation of tragic events later on in the history of Parnell. Mr. T. M. Healy was already a barrister making his way, and even then his conspicuous talents, especially in the way of destructive vituperation, were known. As has been seen, he had besides been intimately associated with Parnell in his historic and momentous visit to America. He had sat by him for several years in the House of Commons, and already was known there as one of the most formidable and effective debaters in the Parnellite ranks. He was thus in every way entitled to be one of Parnell's counsel; but Parnell did not nominate him. How deeply Mr. Healy felt this deliberate slight is proved in his letters home to his family at the time. In one of them he tells with satisfaction that he sat only one place removed from Parnell, and that Parnell bowed to him, but that he ignored the overture.

As to the general course of the case, it was one which produced the most painful impressions on the minds of Irishmen. The evidence for *The Times* consisted of a dreary and apparently interminable procession of self-confessed murderers who had been paid by *The Times* to become informers. I remember still a horrid little creature who

described in full detail how he had murdered a man who had been condemned to death as a traitor to some murder plot in which he and the witness had been engaged. He told the story with something like an inane smile, while the blood of the listeners ran cold.

The Attorney-General, acting up to the programme of the Government in extending the enquiry from the forged letter to the long story of the agitation in Ireland, kept this dreary procession of terrible witnesses going as long as he could. Sir Charles Russell, showing now and then his irritation, insisted over and over again on the production of the real case, namely the authenticity or forging of the so-called Parnell letter, but the Attorney-General was not to be hurried, and so this went on for day after day, the impatience of the public probably accompanying the impatience of the defendants and their counsel. But at last one day the Government did produce a witness quite remarkable, very dramatic, and something much newer and much more striking than all these miserable wretches who had first committed crime from blood lust, and confessed it for the lust of money. This was Major Le Caron.

Le Caron looked the part. He was a very thin man, with black hair, piercing black eyes, small, pallid face, with regular features and a waxed moustache. The name, somehow or other, had been familiar to me for years; one of my associates in our movement used to talk to me of him. Le Caron was in London at the time, and my friend used to speak of him as far and away the most extreme and the bravest figure in the Fenian ranks in the United States, and he explained his name by saying that he was a French-Canadian. His name was also made familiar to me by the publication in one of the Irish organs of what is called in America a "card"—an advertisement of a certain

type. In this card he announced himself as a chemist. I heard also from his own lips in the witness-box that he had taken a prominent part in the Chicago Convention, which Mr. Healy, Father Sheehy, and myself had attended in 1881.

Le Caron the Spy

He must have had extraordinary powers of dissimulation. He was able to show that he had the confidence of the revolutionaries to the fullest extent. He was a member of their most secret and powerful governing body —a body which, among other things, had the right of trying for his life anybody who was suspected of being unfaithful to the Cause—so to speak, a sort of Irish-American "Cheka"—and he had joined in condemning men to death. He was able to produce letters, among others, from Mr. Patrick Egan—at that time the treasurer, and in some respects the most powerful of the inner rulers of our organization in Ireland. Egan had been obliged to live for many years in exile in Paris, at once for the protection of himself from imprisonment and of the vast sums which were sent to him as treasurer in the United States, amounting sometimes to hundreds of thousands of pounds. There was a letter which spoke of Le Caron as worthy of all confidence, and one of the sincerest and bravest of men in the Fenian movement. It was a circular letter given to Le Caron on a visit he was paying to the Southern States. Le Caron himself enjoyed so hugely this joke that he laughed openly when it was read in the Commission Court.

It turned out that Le Caron was an Englishman, born in Colchester, and that his real name was Beach. He had been instructed for years by Scotland Yard, and was in fact the chief spy employed by them in recording the movements of the Fenians in America. He had meetings

constantly at his drug store just outside Chicago, and in the stillness and silence of the night he used to write long reports to some agent of Scotland Yard in London. It need scarcely be said that if any single one of his letters had ever been discovered his life would have been forfeit. This extraordinary creature had been able for several years to carry on without detection the work of betrayal, with the result that there was no movement of any importance in the Fenian Party which was not known almost immediately afterwards through his agency.

He fully realized the importance of the part he had played. He had become somewhat Americanized in manner, in spite of his birth in Colchester. He was carefully, not to say dandiacally dressed; he attitudinized a good deal in the box, with great and almost amusing self-complacency. There was something also in the pallid and cadaverous cheeks that suggested the long years of peril through which he had passed. Altogether he was a very dramatic figure. It was curious that a man with such a face—which, to say the least, was a little sinister—should have been able to deceive for two generations the suspicious and ferocious men among whom he passed his life.

Among many other of his adventures was an interview which he had had in one of the corridors of the House of Commons with Parnell and James O'Kelly. Le Caron represented that in this conversation both Parnell and O'Kelly complained of the hostility that the secret revolutionary organization was creating against the Parliamentary movement, and asked Le Caron to use his influence with some of the leaders of the secret organization to abate this hostility. Possibly all this was true, but the spy went on to add that Parnell used words which implied that he was in favour of a revolutionary movement to liberate Ireland by force of arms. I do not think

this part of Le Caron's evidence obtained credence in any party. As a matter of fact, I had heard Parnell, as I have already said, many times discussing the revolutionary resort, and though he never professed to condemn any such movement as immoral, he always dismissed it as quite incapable of success, going, as I have already noted, into military details as to the geographical conditions of Ireland to show what an easy prey it would be to any army that came from England. When his own evidence came, Parnell entirely denied using the language with regard to his attitude to revolution which Le Caron had attributed to him, and undoubtedly Parnell was telling the truth.

The Drama within the Drama

Throughout all this and the other exciting scenes of the Commission, there was going on a visible and striking drama within the drama. Parnell was in his place every day, and one of the persons present at the trial, a legal gentleman with no connection with the trial except as a representative of the firm of George Lewis, which was conducting the case for Parnell, recalled my recollection to the fact that when Parnell took his seat he conveyed to the whole body of those present, friendly and hostile, his instinctive power of commanding respect and even honour. There was always a vacant seat near him, and he seemed alone. But he was keenly attentive to everything that was going on, and he could be seen pretty constantly making suggestions to Russell, his chief counsel. These suggestions, I gathered from my observations, were not always welcome; some of them, apparently, to judge by Russell's expression, were either contrary to the rules of evidence—of which Parnell, of course, knew nothing—or irrelevant, or perhaps even damaging, but one could hear Parnell, in a

hoarse and almost raucous whisper that betrayed his intense passion, continuing this programme of unwelcome suggestion to his chief legal defender.

It was also observed that Parnell always came in with a small case, rather like a small portmanteau, and there was a great deal of curiosity to know what this case contained, especially because Parnell seemed to pay so much attention to it, and carried it almost as scrupulously and vigilantly as though it were a jewel box with valuable contents that might become open to the hand of a thief. It was discovered later on that the box contained nothing more perilous than a second pair of socks, which Mrs. O'Shea had insisted on his carrying every day to the Court, so that if by any accident his feet got wet he might save himself from the peril of a cold by changing his socks.

The moment was now coming when Parnell woke up to the magnitude and drama of the situation, and when, for the first time, one saw the manifestation of the burning passion that raged within this apparently impassive man. This was when Captain O'Shea was called. O'Shea was in appearance what he had always been, only a little more so. He was very carefully dressed, he had a very composed manner, and he gave his evidence with an appearance of almost frank bonhomie. He was shown the letter of *The Times*, and asked to pronounce an opinion on the genuineness of Parnell's signature to the fateful document. O'Shea, who, as I have insisted, was much cleverer than he was supposed to be, led up to his evidence on that point with great dexterity. With a deprecatory smile he turned to the Attorney-General and disclaimed any pretence to being anything like an expert on hand-writing. Having apparently disarmed criticism in this way, he looked carefully at the letter and the signature, and then gave his opinion that, from his extensive knowledge of Parnell's writing

and of his signature, he regarded the signature as genuine. In view of what took place very soon afterwards, the astounding character of this declaration will be realized.

Echo of Phoenix Park Trials

Among the Phoenix Park prisoners were two brothers; one, Dan Delaney, was executed; the other, Pat Delaney, saved his neck by pleading guilty, giving privy information, and throwing himself upon the mercy of the Court. He was sent to penal servitude for life, but he was brought from Maryborough Convict Prison to London, and gave evidence before *The Times* Commission, with the object of connecting the Land League with the Assassination Club. This ruffian, Delaney, who was now a witness for *The Times*, had kept watch in Phœnix Park on that bloody Sunday, had stretched at full length to intimate surreptitiously the coming of the victim Burke, and he afterwards took the knives from Carey to Brady, with Carey's instructions that they should be destroyed. "They were destroyed in my presence," he said, "I saw Brady break the handles and burn them and the knives."

According to Delaney's narrative, there was to be a long series of murders. Judge Lawson was to be murdered; so were Earl Spencer and a number of policemen and detectives. The desperate convict lightly connected all these hideous plots with the Land League, and declared that the League and the Fenian Brotherhood were part and parcel of the same organization—the League being entrusted with the duty of preparing the country for the military action which the Fenian Brotherhood would initiate and conduct. He threw Fenians, Invincibles, Land Leaguers into one mould, like dice into a box.

Finally, the man Delaney declared that the treasurer

Saturday

of the Land League paid money in support of Carey for one of the wards of Dublin, "in the hope that an Invincible might become Lord Mayor of Dublin". There was a shout of laughter in Court.

At last Delaney was delivered into the hands of Sir Charles Russell for cross-examination. It was revealed that the convict had been interviewed in Maryborough Prison by a *Times* agent, Mr. Shannon. Mr. Shannon, it seems, made him swear to the truth of his statements. "He gave me a book," said Delaney; "I kissed it. I didn't know what it was, but it was a book of some description." Those in Court laughed at this revelation of Delaney's notions of the sacredness of what he was swearing by.

Russell then read aloud the Fenian proclamations of the very period to which Delaney had been testifying. In these Fenian documents the Irish Party were denounced as "scramblers for Parliamentary place and power", and as "deserters of the Irish cause". "Did you not know that, sir?" Russell exclaimed in a severe tone. Delaney hesitated, but said that he remembered something of the sort. He admitted that at one of Parnell's early meetings—in the Dublin Rotunda—the Fenians attempted to storm the platform. He confessed that he had had no direct personal communication with the Fenians and Land Leaguers whom he had been accusing all along of having hatched the Invincibles' conspiracy. "And so it comes to this", said Sir Charles, "that you know it by hearsay!"

It was when answering Michael Davitt, himself an old Fenian, that Delaney showed his only trace of emotion. Nobody, he said, had spoken to him about the Commission, not his warder, nor his wife—for, being poor, she had been unable to visit him during the previous two years. At a later stage in cross-examination he was brought to a reference to Carey, and he exclaimed with

some feeling: "Yes, I was one of his dupes—to my grief".

Delaney sought to turn the tables on Davitt, who was bringing him over some open meetings in the late 'seventies that were held to obtain the amnesty of Fenian prisoners and that were attended by such an unblemished constitutionalist as Isaac Butt. "Yes," retorted Delaney, "but there were secret meetings as well, meetings at which none but Fenians were admitted, and you attended them." But Mr. Davitt got back upon Delaney; at the time when he was supposed to have been at this meeting, Davitt observed that he was in America. And he recalled the historic fact that four of the extreme men had gone to his lodgings with the avowed intention of shooting him, after he had given his adherence to the constitutional movement.

Frank Byrne in Paris

The indiscreet proceedings of one young man whom I had employed in the offices of the National League of Great Britain, on the recommendation of a dear colleague of mine, Dr. Commins, gave me alarm and concern at the time. His name was Frank Byrne, and he was the secretary of our League, and by every appearance his heart was sunk in the work. But according to the evidence of Carey at the Phoenix Park trials, the surgical knives which were used by the assassins were bought by Byrne in London, and were brought over to Carey by Byrne's wife, who had concealed them in her petticoats during the journey. When the informer began to talk freely, Byrne fled to Paris, and although he was arrested by the French government at the request of Great Britain, the extradition proceedings were not pursued, and upon his release

Byrne went to the United States. But his wife, who had held her ground, was arrested and brought to Dublin for identification by Carey. Yet curiously, when he was confronted by Mrs. Byrne, this inexplicable creature, by some strange reasoning or prompting of the heart, declined to identify her. They tried him again, but he would only repeat: "That is not the woman". And so she had to be discharged. But it was long until we were to hear the last of Frank Byrne and his wife.

The story which Pigott fabricated for the receptive ears of the secretary of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union was that Byrne, in his haste to get away to America, had left behind in Paris a black bag which contained letters that would prove a connection between the Land League and the assassins' club. Letters were supposed to be lying there with Parnell's signature that would expose him as the partner behind their bloody deeds. So the gullible Mr. Houston supplied Pigott with some thousands of pounds, in various proportions from time to time, to buy the contents of the black bag as well as other supposed letters; all were supposed to be under the guardianship of a small number of Fenians who found it convenient to live in Paris. So coolly did Pigott execute his bluff that in a Paris hotel, as he handed over some of his forgeries, he received in return a large sum to satisfy the demands of some "gentlemen downstairs", as he termed them—the Fenians who were supposed to have brought him the bag and to be waiting impatiently in the lounge for their money.

I need not say that Pigott's statements were as false as his forgeries; they were a cool and colossal fabrication from start to finish, and the truth was not in him. Indeed, the surprising thing was that Pigott found anybody to believe him. He had tricked Forster, and was an expert

in what is called double-crossing. After the sittings of the Parnell Commission, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman made a statement which added to the surprise that the accusers should ever have ventured to put Pigott in the witness-box. He said that when he was Chief Secretary for Ireland, Pigott's bad character was a topic of "common gossip" in Dublin. When Sir Henry received a letter from Pigott at that time, his private secretary advised him: "Whatever you do, let me answer the letter, and upon no account answer in your own handwriting".

Captain O'Shea, under cross-examination, described how Mr. Joseph Chamberlain and the landlords' official, Houston, were the intermediaries through whom he arranged to appear as a witness for *The Times*; how, about the date when arrangements were going on, he dined with the editor of *The Times*; and how, once upon a time, he stated, on the authority of a man named Mulqueeney, that someone knew of a payment of money by Parnell to Frank Byrne to enable the latter to escape arrest on a charge of complicity in the Phoenix Park murders. "It was after that statement of Mulqueeney's", asked Sir Charles Russell, "that you were a candidate for Galway?" "Yes." "Then you did not believe those statements about Mr. Parnell?" "Oh, no," said O'Shea, "certainly not."

Then Russell put questions to O'Shea about his relations with a certain group of Fenians in 1886, who were said to be getting up a testimonial to O'Shea by way of protest against his expulsion from the Nationalist Party. "Did you tell anyone", asked Russell, "in the winter of 1885–86 that there were, in London, American Fenians who were hostile to Mr. Parnell and who had letters compromising him?" Captain O'Shea did not recollect that he had said "hostile", but said he had been told of these

American Fenians by Mulqueeney. I believe that in putting this group of questions Russell was inspired by Parnell.

Parnell's Watch on O'Shea

To show the stealthy and fugitive lengths to which Parnell carried his distrust of O'Shea, I must tell of a circumstance which puts Parnell in rather a ridiculous light. There was a public-house in the region of Leicester Square which was one of the favourite haunts of this particular group of Fenians who were "hostile" to Parnell, and Parnell suspected O'Shea of going there to plot with them against him. So he used to lurk about outside, strangely muffled, and watch the doors to see if the loathed one would appear; sometimes, I believe, he took Campbell, his secretary, with him on this extraordinary work of detection—which, if necessary at all, might have been left to a subordinate, but for Parnell's dogged reticence at this time on the subject of O'Shea.

The man Mulqueeney, who was a clerk in Victoria Docks, resembled Carey in assembling in his bosom professions of religion, violent revolutionary sentiments, and the seeds of ultimate treachery to the things which he vehemently expounded. He had been the secretary to the Catholic Young Men's Society of London, and, as a friend of Byrne's, had played the double game of assisting in the routine work of the National League and intriguing underground with the irreconcilables. He was vain of the sound of his own voice, and used to speak at small branch meetings of the National League around London. His brand of patriotism exemplified Dr. Johnson's definition. Mulqueeney, called by *The Times* to corroborate O'Shea, said that Byrne had shown him revolvers and rifles, as well as a parcel, of which Byrne said that "the doctor"—

he was a certain Dr. Hamilton Williams—"had been buying some new surgical instruments".

After Byrne's flight from London, Mulqueeney had taken the fugitive's effects to Paris. But Mulqueeney was chiefly to witness to Parnell's payment of a hundred pounds as alleged flight money to Byrne. Byrne had written from Paris to the London executive of the League: "Mr. M'Sweeney will also inform you that I received the promised cheque for £100 from Mr. Parnell on the day I left London".

It was Mr. Asquith, in cross-examination, who gave Mulqueeney's story a different colour. Byrne had made three applications to Parnell for a hundred pounds to pay staff wages of the League, which had fallen into arrears, and in a fourth letter he acknowledged the hundred pounds, and at the same time enclosed a balance-sheet of the League, in which Parnell's cheque was accounted for. Here is an extract from Mr. Asquith's cross-examination—

Did you tell Captain O'Shea that certain people knew that Mr. Parnell had paid for the escape of the Phoenix Park murderers?—I don't think so.

Then if Captain O'Shea says that, what he says is not correct?—I don't know.

You must know whether you made such a statement as that to Captain O'Shea?—Possibly I did, but I have no recollection of it. If Captain O'Shea says I did, then I did.

Now tell me—did you tell Captain O'Shea that certain people knew that Mr. Parnell had paid for the escape of the Phoenix Park murderers?—Well, to my mind he did.

Did what?—Paid for the escape of Byrne.

How?—In the hundred pounds.

And do you now suggest that this hundred pounds was paid by Mr. Parnell to Byrne to enable him to escape from justice?—I suggest that the money was sent to Byrne, and that he used it to go to America.

In other words, that Byrne misappropriated the money? —Probably that is so.

That, Mr. Parnell having sent him a hundred pounds for the Land League purposes, he bolted to Paris, and thence to America?—Well, I don't know. Possibly that is correct.

Was that what you meant when you told Captain O'Shea that certain people knew that Mr. Parnell had paid for the escape of the Phoenix Park murderers?—I don't think I told him anything of the kind.

If you made that statement to Captain O'Shea, had you any foundation for it other than that this hundred pounds had been, as you believed, misappropriated by Byrne?—I had nothing in my mind but Byrne's letter.

And thus this letter of Byrne's, which seems to have been found by the police during one of their occasional raids on the London headquarters of the National League, proved as phantom an exhibit as the forgeries of Pigott. It must seem strange that men like Byrne and Mulqueeney could have been associated with the work of the National League while they were at the same time undoing our work underground. Everything we were trying for was being hindered and upset by these terrorizing gangs in the background, who hated us for canalizing the blind forces of unrest into constitutional channels. To combine adherence to these two movements seems to the rational mind as fantastic an undertaking as to fight a fire with petrol. But the longer I live the more deeply I realize that there is an uncertain personal element in human nature which goes deeper than explanation, and is responsible in otherwise rational minds for the substitution for reason of some chaotic phantasy or phobia.

Parnell had to create a constitutional movement where none had been before, and he had to build it from many strange, untamed elements. He won a partial allegiance, never much more than a grudging toleration, from a

section of the extremists; but there were other elements that never concealed their hostility. There were prominent Fenians like James O'Kelly, Matt Harris, and Michael Davitt who dropped all intercourse with Fenianism after they came into the new movement. While Parnell thus converted conspiracy into constitutionalism, it was inevitable that a certain number of opportunists should have tried to keep a foot in both parties. These men were always an embarrassment to us, and it was on their indiscretions that *The Times* sought to restore their indictment of us after the flight and suicide of Pigott.

J. F. X. O'Brien and James O'Kelly

One of the mild thrills at *The Times* Commission, particularly for the lady spectators in the gallery, was the examination of elderly gentlemen of our party, who avowed that they had been Fenians and had militant pasts before finding the constitutional faith. "In 1867 were you not sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered?" counsel asked of one mild little old man with a long, thick, whitish-grey beard, and a nicely trimmed whitish-grey wig, primly parted in the middle. "Just so," replied Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, imperturbably. "For high treason, I believe?" "For high treason." This terrific and ludicrous sentence had been passed upon him twenty-two years before for taking part in an attack on a police barracks in Ballyknockane, in County Cork. There was "no change", as the saying is, to be got from old J. F. X. True to his old-time loyalties, he point-blank refused to divulge anything upon which his Fenian oath bound him to secrecy. Sir Henry James did not press him. So after a couple of minutes this mild-mannered sensationalist left the witness-box.

Another of the old guard was James O'Kelly, who apart from his revolutionary activities had been all over the world as a soldier of fortune. As a member of the French Foreign Legion he had fought in Oran, and learned all the wiles as well as all the dangers of Arabian warfare. When Maximilian was made Emperor of Mexico, French forces were sent by the Emperor Napoleon to win for his nominee his new dominion, and O'Kelly's regiment was one of those detailed for service. Made prisoner by the forces of General Canales, O'Kelly escaped by river in a "dug-out"—a rude boat hollowed out of a tree. After vicissitudes in Texas and the States, he rejoined the French Army and served through the Franco-Prussian war. After the fall of Paris, he went to New York, and established his name in journalism by securing an exclusive interview with General Sheridan on his homecoming from Europe. As a war correspondent in the Cuban revolution of 1873, O'Kelly in defiance of the Spanish Commander penetrated to the Cuban lines, saw General Cespides and spent a month with the rebels.

On returning to the Spanish lines, O'Kelly was thrown into a fœtid dungeon; bound with ropes, he was conveyed to another prison in Havana, where he was again thrown into a cell—this time of such sickening odour that he had to fly continually to the grated door in the hope of breathing fresher air. It was evident that the Spanish authorities were bent upon inducing his death from yellow fever. He escaped all these perils, however, and was sent to Spain, where—through the intercession of Isaac Butt, among others—he was set at liberty. Later on, he went through the war with the Sioux Indians, and still later adopted many adroit expedients in an unsuccessful effort to reach the Mahdi.

O'Kelly gave Sir Henry James full and frank details of

his connection with the Fenians; in fact, he had been a member of the Clan-na-Gael. In America, in 1879, he said, there was a belief that Ireland was about to be visited by famine; in which case the physical force party had resolved to fight. And O'Kelly came over from America to Ireland, ready to fight for the peasants against their landlords, in the event of a famine. He came, as he expressed it, to "organize" Ireland for insurrection. But he found that the new leaders in Ireland were going in for Parliamentary action, and so in 1880 he threw in his lot with Parnell. "I found", he said, "that most people in Ireland were inclined to support him, and that there was a strong impression and hope that they could obtain their objects without conspiracy or fighting. I rather sympathized with that view, and so I joined the League."

The Speeches of Matt Harris

Matt Harris, who had been a Fenian until 1880, was the boldest of these veteran witnesses. Explaining his early distrust of the Land League, he confessed that he thought the farmers a rather selfish class, who would care little for national interests if once their sectional interests were sufficiently provided for. Whether secret societies were good or bad, he said, depended upon the circumstances under which they existed and on the manner in which they were conducted. Many of his strong speeches came home to roost. He had accused Davitt of "caterwauling" about the Phoenix Park murders and "canting about cruelty to animals". Davitt had said that if his own brother had been guilty of a crime so brutally wicked and blindly barbaric as cattle-maiming, he would take pleasure in flogging him at the cart's tail. "I said at the time", Matt Harris explained, "that I hated murder and cruelty as

much as he did." He had called a certain landlord a "man-eating tiger" and a woman landlord a "she-devil". He had to explain his "partridge speech" to which I have previously referred. When he said he would under certain circumstances shoot down landlords like partridges in September, he was, he said, speaking only in a figurative sense, as people sometimes do when they say a man ought to be hanged; and then he went on, in deep emotion, to describe how, two days after his father's death, the widow —his mother—and all her children had been evicted from his father's farm. His father had spent five hundred pounds in improvements upon the farm. Matt Harris broke down in the recital, but pulling himself together he cried: "There is a law higher than mere legality; rather than see my wife and children turned out of the home which I had made for them, I would stand in its doorway, gun in hand, and shoot down all the landlords in Ireland, one after the other". Strangely, the court seemed to lean a sympathetic ear to the sincere old man's intemperate utterances. He had formed a tenants' defence association in his own district even before the birth of the Land League—in those pitiable days when the tenants dared not call their souls their own.

Another of our members, Dr. Tanner, had to answer for the occasional vehemence of his public oratory. He could not deny that he had called a certain Mr. Hegarty a "creeping louse". "Did you", he was asked, "ever advise the people to boycott every man, woman, and child who did not support the League?" Dr. Tanner denied that he had ever said any such thing. "I hope I had too much sense to talk of boycotting children," he added. He did not recollect comparing the evictor to a hawk or a carrion crow, and the grabber to a vulture feeding upon dead carrion. Dr. Tanner would not answer for the exact ex-

pressions; "but", said he, "I have denounced grabbers to the best of my ability". He justified boycotting on the ground that his fashionable practice in Cork had been ruined when he became a Nationalist politician. If the classes boycotted, why not the masses?

Agents in the Box

"It is attributed to you", said Sir Charles Russell to one agent who was himself a landlord, "that you have a battering-ram on your premises." "I have," said this Mr. Hanley, of Tipperary. "Is that to assist in battering down the house of tenants who are to be evicted?" "It is to save time," was the reply. "And for motives of humanity?" "Not exactly. But I may say that I attend all evictions on my property to prevent outrage." "How do you manage the battering-ram—by machinery?" "It is drawn by horses."

Russell asked a landlord, who complained that he had been shot at:"Did you ever expend one farthing in assisting your tenants?" "No," was the smiling reply. It was quite true, he explained, that although the potato crop on which the tenants lived was bad, the corn crop with which they paid their rents was good. His tenants were in receipt of doles from the relief committees of the time.

Lord Kenmare's agent, in his anxiety to bring home responsibility for unrest to the Land League, said that although the tenants were "blue with hunger" during the distress of 1879–80, they refrained from agitation against the landlords. The Leaguers spoiled this heaven's reflex. There had been evictions before, but no tenant barricaded his house—"he went off to America, and he left his farm behind him". But from the coming of the League, armies of police and troops were required for evictions—why, only lately he had employed "four hundred troops" in

evicting a single tenant. He complained that the very children were fed on the sedition of the League—five hundred of them left school singing "God save Ireland", because the children of one of Lord Kenmare's process-servers had come to school.

The witness's confidence was not disturbed by a quotation from General Gordon, who visited the district after his return from his first journey to the Sudan, and, writing from Glengarriff, described the state of the people as worse than that of any other people he knew, and offered a thousand pounds to any landlord who would live a tenant's life in a tenant's cabin for a week. And to this might be added John Bright's observation to the effect that if Ireland were a thousand miles off, and the landlords and the tenants left face to face, the tenants would soon settle their differences.

The parish priest of the tenants in Connemara whose woman landlord had been called the "she-devil" told of their diet of potatoes or boiled seaweed—"a slow poison" he called it—and said that she exacted from them a third of the kelp that they dragged in from the sea. A landlord named Bingham kept alive in Mayo the *corvée*, forcing twelve days' annual labour from his tenants; he was fired at. Another Mayo landlord was twice fired at, and his effigy was burned. He was cross-examined on a certain eviction. "Was not the tenant's wife in bed?" "She was." "She refused to get out of bed?" "She did." "Did the sheriff pull her out?" "No." "Did the bailiffs?" "No." "Did the police?" "No." And at last it came out that the landlord had carried her out himself. But he did not "carry her out naked in the presence of the bystanders". He explained that she "began to kick her clothes off". The good lady, of course, was ill, or pretending to be ill.

A more poignant incident was brought home to a land-

lord in County Cork—that a tenant whom he had evicted died of exposure in a ditch under the shelter of an upturned boat. The landlord had been complaining to the Commission that he had received a resolution from the League in terms that were "too foul for publication".

A relieving officer from the Tuam district remembered the Great Famine. He spoke of finding two bodies on the road, and told how he was present at an inquest on the bodies of two children who died of starvation in a barn, where their corpses were partly eaten by rats. Another old man had seen a Bianconi car held up because of the corpses lying thick along the highway. He described the death of a child as it was seeking nourishment on its dead mother's breast. They put the baby and mother in one coffin. "I myself", he said, "brought thirty dead bodies to the grave in bags."

Humours of the Commission

I pass from these poignant, sombre facts to a few of the humours of the Commission. One merry Church of Ireland parson, who had the temerity to join the League, was asked about religious toleration. "Why," he said, "I advertised a sermon on 'The Sin of Land-grabbing' and I had the congregation of my life—all the Catholics came to hear me." Oh, he knew about boycotting—the landlords, because of his sympathy with the League, cut down their church offerings. "Colonel Chute boycotted me by decreasing my stipend, and then his tenants came to me to ask me to lend them money to pay him the rent." A parish priest was asked why he had not denounced outrages, and he declared indignantly that he had done so "for forty Sundays running". A Kerry priest was asked: "Did you ever exhort your people to try and bring criminals to

justice?" "I might as well ask them", was the reply, "to capture Jack the Ripper."

Until the Commission accustomed their ears to the accents from over the sea there were some amusing errors in acoustics. The very first witness was a police note-taker. "I cannot follow him at all," said the President of the Court, Sir James Hannen; "I cannot hear or understand what he is saying." The official shorthand-writer was appealed to, but he confessed that he had not been able to follow the witness. Then the head constable was set to read from his shorthand notes instead of from the printed transcript. But, confronted with his own notes, he floundered hopelessly. "Is there much more of this?" the President enquired, wearily.

Some of the specimens of hillside oratory were ludicrous. There was advice to "sell the old cow and buy a rifle". Another orator declared that he did not care if some of his enemies "had their throats cut before morning". "Scrab" Nally, a vagabond celebrity who used to get on the platforms when the meetings were all over, was reported as saying: "Why do you allow land-grabbers to live? Don't speak to them. Leave their corn and meadows uncut, and they will commit suicide without the pills." "Pills" was the jargon for ammunition. One firebrand was called "Doctor" Tully because of his constant references to the "medicine" and the "pills". A certain Mike Boyton spoke of land-grabbers as "rank weeds that were growing on the green soil that was once pressed by the blessed footsteps of Saint Bridget!"

There were many cases of hostile witnesses. One had only been dragged out of bed and given "a few sthrokes"; another said: "Sure they only gave me a few grains of powder that I picked out myself". To the question, "Were you knocked down and beaten?" the reply came: "And if I

was I don't remember, and I wouldn't blame the League for it". "Were you beaten?" counsel persisted. "I don't think I understand the word at all." "Did you go to any office near the Strand the other day?" "I don't know any office, sir; but I was on the strand picking seaweed the other day."

One of the police witnesses adopted an obsequious attitude to Sir Charles Russell. "Yes, Sir Char-lis." "No, Sir Char-lis." "Quite right, Sir Char-lis." "It might be, Sir Char-lis." At length the examiner could bear it no longer. "Don't call me Sir Charles," he roared. "Very well, Sir Char-lis," came the prompt assurance.

Le Caron, the *agent provocateur*, had stated that he had been entertained in Dublin by Dr. Kenny, M.P., who showed him round the city and drove with him on a jaunting car to Kilmainham. The Doctor had no recollection of meeting Le Caron. The *agent provocateur* was brought into Court. Kenny looked down at him and then said quietly: "I would never let a man with a face like that enter my house". Le Caron retired. "What's wrong with the face?" asked the Attorney-General, ready for combat. "It speaks for itself," said the Doctor. "As what?" "As that of a man I would not choose for a friend." "What do you mean?" "The face is as false as a man ever wore."

T.P. and an Irish Counsel

I made some small and brief contribution myself to relieving the tedium of those interminable proceedings—the Commission sat for a hundred and twenty-six days. I pointed out that some of the crimes on which the police statistics of 1881 were based included upsetting a beehive and spilling a barrel of tar. Mr. Ronan—who died recently in the fullness of his years, Lord Justice Ronan of the

Irish bench; he was a Tory Catholic—one of the Irish counsel for *The Times*—asked me what was the beginning "not of the Land League or of the National League, but of the Parnell movement". I did not quite know what he meant, but I answered: "I should say the Parnell movement began three centuries ago". As Mr. Ronan plunged among his books and papers, seeking material to prove to me that the Parnellite movement had American origin anterior to the Land League, the President remarked dryly that the whole thing was growing "like a Chinese puzzle". Mr. John Macdonald, the *Daily News* sketch-writer of the day, said—

"Mr. Ronan went at T.P. like a barking terrier at a taciturn, good-natured mastiff. He was making hard efforts to wring something treasonable out of Mr. O'Connor's American speeches. Had Mr. O'Connor said that British rule in Ireland was without legal or moral sanction? 'Certainly,' said Mr. O'Connor, 'British rule in Ireland, being against the wishes of the Irish people, was without moral sanction; it might be legal because every government was *de facto* legal.'

"Next Mr. Ronan tried, but unsuccessfully, to get Mr. O'Connor to admit that there was an encouragement to murder in a passage of one of his American speeches, in which he said he would not like to be an insurance agent for a man who took an evicted farm, adding (what Mr. Ronan omitted to quote) that that was a horrible and savage state of things produced by misrule. Next Mr. Ronan plied him with questions about moonlighting. 'I know nothing about it,' said Mr. O'Connor. 'The Moonlighters did not make me their father-confessor. You ought to know more about them than I do, for you have lived more in Ireland.' Twice or thrice the President interfered to say that he could not see the point of Mr. Ronan's questions. It was altogether a rambling, incoherent, futile piece of cross-examination."

Mr. Ronan was not asked to cross-examine again.

Richard Pigott under Fire

So the days went on, and still there was no sign of the chief witness. After a time, however, the tension could no longer be sustained, and Richard Pigott at last was put into the box. I can see him still, with his round, bald head, his white beard, his flushed cheeks. He was carefully dressed, and for a while, at least, when under direct examination, he seemed to be self-possessed; but then came his cross-examination by Sir Charles Russell. I have to confess that, much as I detested and despised the poor wretch, the sight of him under the dreadful exposure of Sir Charles Russell, the crumbling up, not merely of his evidence, but of all his body—the look of a man at last brought to bay and to disastrous exposure, filled me with a certain compassion.

One of the very first things Sir Charles Russell did was to ask Pigott to write down certain words; the chief of these words were "likelihood" and "hesitancy"—words that occurred in the forged letter. They were misspelt as "likelehood" and "hesitency" in the paper he handed back to Russell, and they were so misspelt in the forgery!

As the terrible moments passed by, the breakdown of Pigott became more and more apparent. His exposure was complete. First, letter after letter was produced that he wrote begging for money, and which showed him to be an expert and professional begging-letter writer. As these letters were being read, bursts of mocking laughter came from all parts of the Court, and this, of course, added to the confusion of the wretched forger. There was another letter, however, written to the Archbishop of Dublin, which practically hinted a willingness on Pigott's part to go over to the other camp by exposing the conspiracy with regard to the forged letters of which he himself was the originator.

He was kept another full day on the rack of this merciless cross-examination, in which all the mean weaknesses of his life and his palpable guilt of forgery were heaped in turn upon the cowering, miserable, despairing figure. On the next day, when his name was called, it was discovered that he had fled to Madrid. Detectives immediately were on his track; their presence was announced to him, and he was taken into custody. He begged their permission to retire into his bedroom, and there he committed suicide by a pistol shot through his brain. It may be mentioned, as a specimen of the many contradictions in the Irish character, that around his neck hung a scapular —a devout practice with Irish Roman Catholics.

This tragic ending of Pigott was practically the ending also of public interest in the case. The Attorney-General was compelled to get up and make a confession on the part of *The Times*, and to make an apology. The apology was considered by everybody to be insufficient, and rather added to the indignation against the whole business.

One of the remarkable incidents which was noticed with universal amazement during the cross-examination of Pigott was the behaviour of Mr. Justice Day. Throughout all the days up to this moment, Judge Day had retained the unnatural calm of his dark face, and I do not think he had uttered a single word. Suddenly this grim figure turned to loud and hearty laughter. Laughter literally shook his sides and was a sort of obbligato to the evidence of the miserable wretch on the rack in cross-examination. His whole frame shook—his eyebrows shook —his long whiskers shook—he could not contain himself. The astounded audience looked on at this spectacle with open surprise and burning interest. After the departure of the cause of this judicial merriment, Mr. Justice Day returned to his gloom and never smiled again.

Henry James at the Trial

There was one more incident to which I allude. I was privileged to have a seat to myself for describing the proceedings, for I had at the moment come into considerable prominence by having started a successful evening paper, still in existence, called the *Star*. I occupied this seat whenever I could, although it was a heavy addition to my editorial duties, and my constant presence night and day in the House of Commons. Occasionally, however, I absented myself, and one day when I got back I found a no less portentous form than that of Henry James, the great novelist, in my seat. I had to stand up; I felt it would be discourteous to displace so eminent a man even from my own seat.

I was sitting there when there came the one painful and almost ignominious episode on our side. Mr. Parnell was giving evidence, and among other things the Attorney-General quoted to him a speech he had made in the House of Commons on January 27, 1881, in which he declared that secret conspiracies had then ceased to exist in Ireland. Parnell answered that he remembered the speech, but he could not say without reading what was in his mind in urging that argument, and then: "but it is possible I was endeavouring to mislead the House on the occasion".

I never will forget the dreadful sensation which this statement created in my mind; it was as though a cold douche of iced water had penetrated to every vein in my body. Every counsel, every Member of Parliament, every friend and supporter of Parnell felt the same. At long last, after all our triumphs in the exposure of Pigott, our chief had given the case away. Nobody felt it more strongly than Mr. Asquith. Parnell was apparently unconscious of

his terrible *faux pas*. He asked Asquith, borrowing a figure from cricket, to which he was in his youth very much addicted, if he did not think the Attorney-General had been bowling rather wide. "Yes," replied Asquith, "but that was no reason why the cricketer should hit the wickets with his own bat." Curiously enough, the Commissioners in their finding gave a more favourable verdict on this celebrated and unfortunate passage in Parnell's evidence; they found that Parnell was alluding in the House of Commons to secret societies other than the Fenian conspiracy, and that he was correct when he made that statement.

Parnell, so calm a witness, frequently scored over the impatient Attorney-General, Sir Richard Webster. There was a five-pound cheque payment which Parnell could not at once account for. The Attorney-General became more inquisitive. Then Parnell remembered. "My subscription to the Wicklow Harriers," he said. But was Parnell aware that the outrageous writer "Transatlantic" of the *Irish World* had subscribed a guinea to the Land League? No, Parnell was not aware, but he was "glad to hear it". Would Parnell look for the missing books of the Ladies' Land League? No, indeed, he would not. (The League, led by his sister, had been a source of embarrassment to Parnell, and he closed it down at the first opportunity.) Had Parnell remonstrated with some of his colleagues on their inflammatory speeches? Sometimes, if he did not approve of their speeches. Had he joined a secret society? Yes. Name? The Foresters.

When Parnell slipped he had been many hours under cross-examination. People probably did not notice it at the time, but it was a sad portent of what happened almost three years to the day afterwards, when he lay dead. He began to look flushed and also worn.

The only incident in the remaining part of the proceedings was the magnificent speech of Sir Charles Russell, which lasted for seven days. It was really a great and splendid historical review of Irish history, and it was made further noteworthy by the scribbled note which Lord Justice Hannen sent down from the Bench: "A great speech, worthy of a great occasion".

This exposure of the foul conspiracy against Parnell placed him in the most triumphant position he had yet reached. So conscious was the House of his triumph that when shortly afterwards he got up to speak, every member of the Liberal and the Irish benches, including Gladstone, stood up—a mark of homage that has not occurred probably more than half a dozen times in the long history of the House of Commons.

Scotland Yard and some "Agents Provocateurs"

The ignominy of the Government over the failure of this terrible attack on Parnell was increased by their attitude during the trial and afterwards. So far as they dared, they had placed all their resources at the back of *The Times*. It was regarded as a scandal that the attack on Parnell and the defence of *The Times* was given to Sir Richard Webster—then the Attorney-General and, as such, an important member of the Government. Scotland Yard and all its resources were also placed at the service of *The Times*.

There was among the officials of the period an Irishman named Sir Robert Anderson; he belonged to one of those Irish Protestant families who had the fiercest hatred and dread of the purposes of the majority of their countrymen, and for at least two generations had given their zealous and effective support to the open and secret forces that

were arrayed against the Nationalist demand and the Nationalist Party.

There was one member of the family in Dublin when I was a young reporter there; he was in the Crown Prosecutor's Department—I forget whether he or his father was then the head of the Department. It was at the time when the leaders of the Fenian conspiracy — many of them Americans—were being tried at the Green Street Courthouse (the Old Bailey of Dublin), and were being sent to long terms of penal servitude; in the case of O'Donovan Rossa—one of the most ferocious of the number—to penal servitude for life. I had to see this Mr. Anderson as a matter of business, and once I slipped into the observation that these were sad times. I still see the smiling face and hear the chuckle and see the joyful rubbing of his hands as he replied that he did not find the times sad at all; they were giving him plenty of work.

Sir Robert Anderson was a brother of this worthy. He was employed and trusted by the Government, as indeed he deserved to be, for he had many of the gifts and all the zeal, both on professional and political grounds, of the political sleuth-hound. He was the man with whom Le Caron, the spy, had been in communication for years. When Le Caron came to be examined, the spy was furnished by Anderson with the secret letters he had been sending to him all this time; and thus documents that were supposed to be secret were placed by Anderson at the disposal of *The Times*—one of the facts that was urged in proof of the charge that the Government were in every way privy to the attack of *The Times* upon Parnell and his associates.

Author of a Sinister Slogan

Of course, in addition to all this, there was the long procession of resident magistrates and chiefs of the police in Ireland, who came to give evidence against Parnell. I ought to give a few words to one of the most picturesque and sinister figures among this great army of *agents provocateurs*; shorthand reporters, who testified to speeches by one or other of the Irish defendants; resident magistrates, the dependents of the Government who, under the Balfour regime, were employed in what was supposed to be the impartial administration of justice—men, as has been said already, who were the bond slaves of the Government, etc. etc. To find facsimiles of these officials under the supposed freedom of the British Constitution you would have to go into the Russia of the Tsars.

But even among this dreadful army, Captain Plunkett stood out. In the course of some investigations, a telegram from him was produced in which were the fateful words—"Do not hesitate to shoot". One day in the corridors of the Court, Captain Plunkett was pointed out to me. He glared at me; I looked attentively and with some surprise at him. He not only looked the part, but he looked it as though he were a figure exaggerated by the hand of a brilliant but cruel caricaturist. I saw the chance of a real journalistic and political *coup*, for I sought and found F. C. Gould—as a caricaturist the greatest man of his time; and Gould produced a perfect portrait of the man, with his bloated face, rubicund with good living, his ferocious ugliness of feature and of look.

He was watched by those whom he was watching, and it used to be whispered that, in addition to his enjoyment of good living, he was a middle-aged Romeo, and his balcony scenes were observed by his political enemies. Of all

the brutal types of the officials of a despotic Government, I don't think even the gallery of Russians could supply a more odious-looking type. He did not long survive the great trial.

The Closing Speeches

I will quote three extracts from the big speeches. The first from Michael Davitt—

"I remember, although I was only a child, we were evicted in Mayo shortly after the Great Famine, and the house in which I was born was burnt down by the agent of the landlord, assisted by the agents of the law. That was not a circumstance that would cause me to be a very warm supporter of the landlord, or for the law as it stood. I remember, although I was only a child, we went to the workhouse a few miles away, and were refused admission, because my mother would not submit to certain conditions imposed on those who seek those homes of degradation. In our English home I have listened to my mother's stories of the Great Famine, and remember hearing from her an account of how three hundred people were buried during that time—were thrown uncoffined into one pit in the corner of the workhouse yard. So great an impression did that make upon me that, twenty-five years afterwards, when I visited the place, I went straight to the very spot. My lords, my experience was the experience of others of my class."

My second extract is from Sir Charles Russell—

"On the hillside above New York the emigrant's attention is drawn to a collection of huts, as miserable as any to be seen in Galway or Mayo. What are they? What purpose have they served? My lords, they have served as squatting refuges for the wretched creatures who have been landed on the hospitable shores—for they have been hospitable shores to the Irish race—of America, but who, without the means to eke out their existence, have been

compelled to seek refuge, until they could find employment, in these wretched homes."

And, finally, I quote Sir Henry James's peroration, which in the light of all that has since happened in Ireland, is a curious revelation of the actual Tory mentality of 1889—

"My lords, long as I have occupied your attention, and badly as the thread of my tale has been told, I have now placed before you, in some sort of sequence, I hope, a history of the past ten years—a sad history to affect any people. It has been a history full of crime, springing from a hasty assumption of power. It is a period of shame, and sad shame, and it is a period that surely Irishmen —patriotic Irishmen—must now and ever will be bitterly regretting. My lords, Ireland has had dark and bitter days in her past. She has sent her strong men to fight upon the open field, and they have fought. Even her statesmen—her eloquent statesmen—have been silent in their sadness, in the days when, we are told, Grattan and Charlemont wept in their sorrow. But I know not that ever until now they had cause to be ashamed of the history of their country. It is said, 'Happy is the country that has no history', and so it might be true of Ireland that such would be the case. This I know, if men doubt the application of that trite statement to Ireland, happy would it have been for this people, happy would it have been for those who acted and for those who suffered, if the events of the last ten years could be blotted out. No human hand can do so—the annihilation of events is impossible, and all that remains, my lords, to do is that faithful record shall be made of those acts that have occurred. Such, my lords, will be your duty. It may be, and probably will be, that all who have taken part in this enquiry, from your lordships to the humblest officer of this Court, will receive some condemnation, some attack, and some obloquy. But let that pass. The effect of the truth being told must be great, for then the people, stirred by an awakened conscience, will be aroused from the dreams of a long night, and, when

awake, they will despise their dreams, and finding at length new modes of action of a higher character, and led by truer men, then it will be—and God grant it may be!—that blessings will be poured upon a happy and contented people."

Lord Randolph Churchill's Memorandum, July 17, 1889

The army of strange witnesses and the utter breakdown of Pigott had brought upon the Government a great deal of discredit, and for a while their political stock was very low, as was evidenced by a series of disasters at the by-elections. "The flowing tide is with us," said Gladstone, and the words passed into a slogan, and appeared on large placards in all the great halls where crowded and enthusiastic Liberals met to support Gladstone and Home Rule. There were sinking hearts even among the supporters of the Government, and their view of the folly of their leaders received additional strength from the obstinacy with which they remained faithful to their lost cause.

Of all the marks of obstinacy none was greater than the character of the apology which Sir Richard Webster gave after the exposure and suicide of Pigott had revealed the foulness of the attack on Parnell. The hesitating Tories were fortunate to find in Lord Randolph Churchill a spokesman. Which led to one of the most tragic moments in his chequered career. He was in a strong position and face to face with the Government; he had for a long time been doubtful about the ultimate effect of the policy of unredeemed and violent Coercion which had been adopted in Ireland by the Government, and he foresaw its evil consequences on the fortunes of his party as well as on the future relations of the two countries.

But what had shocked him most was the conduct of his former colleagues in taking up the case of Pigott and *The*

Times. He had written a long memorandum on the subject uttering the most solemn warnings against this course. It was an unanswerable indictment of the whole conduct of the Government in reference to the Parnell Commission.

"It may be assumed that the Tory Party are under an imperative obligation to avoid seeking escape from political difficulties by extra-constitutional methods. The above is a general rule. The exception to it can scarcely be conceived.

"The case of 'Parnellism and Crime' is essentially a political and Parliamentary difficulty of a minor kind. A newspaper has made against a group of Members of the House of Commons accusations of complicity in assassination, crime, and outrage. In the commencement the parties accused do not feel themselves specially aggrieved. They take no action; the Government responsible for the guidance of the House of Commons does not feel called upon to act in the matter. A Member of Parliament, acting, on his own responsibility, brings the matter before the House of Commons as a matter of privilege, and a Select Committee is moved for to enquire into the allegations.

"The Government take up an unexceptionable and perfectly constitutional position. They refuse the Select Committee on the ground marked out by Sir Erskine May, that matters which may or ought to come within the cognisance of the courts of law are not fit for enquiry by Select Committee. The Government press upon the accused parties their duty, should they feel themselves aggrieved, to proceed against the newspaper legally, and, with a generosity hardly open to condemnation, offer to make the prosecution of the newspaper, so far as expense is concerned, a Government prosecution. The offer is not accepted, the view of duty is disagreed from by the accused persons, the motion for a Select Committee is negatived, and the matter drops, the balance of disadvantage remaining with the accused persons.

"Owing to an abortive and obscurely originated action for libel, the whole matter revives. The original charges

are reiterated in a court of law by the Attorney-General, but owing to the course of the suit no evidence is called to sustain the allegations. A fresh demand is made by the accused persons for a Select Committee, and is refused by the Government on the same grounds as before, and, as before, with a preponderating assent of public opinion. So far, all is satisfactory, except to the accused parties and their sympathizers.

"For reasons not known, the Government take a new departure of a most serious kind. They offer to constitute by statute a tribunal with exceptional powers, to be composed mainly of Judges of the Supreme Court, to enquire into the truth of the allegations. To this course the following objections are obvious and unanswerable—

"1. The offer, to a large extent, recognizes the wisdom and justice of the conduct of the accused persons in avoiding recurrence to the ordinary tribunals.

"2. It is absolutely without precedent. The Sheffield case, the Metropolitan Board of Works case, are by no means analogous. Into these two cases not a spark of political feeling entered. The case of 'Parnellism and Crime', in so far as it is not criminal, is entirely political. In any event, the political character of the case would predominate over the criminal.

"3. It is submitted that it is in the highest degree unwise and, indeed, unlawful, to take the judges of the land out of their proper sphere of duty, and to mix them up in political conflict. In this case, whichever way they decide, they will be the object of political criticism and animadversion. Whatever their decision, speaking roughly, half the country will applaud, the other half condemn, their action; their conduct during the trial in its minutest particulars, every ruling as to evidence, every chance expression, every question put by them, will be keenly watched, canvassed, criticized, censured, or praised. Were judges in England ever placed in such a position before? Will any judge emerge from this enquiry the same for all judicial purposes, moral weight and influence as he went into it? Have you a right to expose your judges, and in all probability, your best judges, to such an ordeal?

"4. The tribunal will conduct its proceedings by methods different to a court of law. The examination will mainly be conducted by the tribunal itself; a witness cannot refuse to reply on the ground that the answer will incriminate himself. Evidence in this way will be extracted which might be made the basis of a criminal prosecution against other persons. Indemnities might be given to persons actually guilty of very grave crime, and persons much less guilty of direct participation in grave crime might, under such protected evidence, be made liable to a prosecution.

"The whole course of proceeding, if the character of the allegations is remembered, will, when carefully considered, be found to be utterly repugnant to our English ideas of legal justice, and wholly unconstitutional. It is hardly exaggerating to describe the Commission contemplated as 'a revolutionary tribunal' for the trial of political offenders. If there is any truth in the above or colour for such a statement, can a Tory Government safely or honourably suggest and carry through such a proposal?

"I would suggest that the constitutional legality of this proposed tribunal be submitted to the judges for their opinion. It is not for the Government, in matters of this kind, to initiate extra-constitutional proceedings and methods. One can imagine an excited Parliament or inflamed public opinion forcing such proceedings on a Government. In this case there is no such pressure. The first duty of a Government would be to resist being driven outside the lines of the Constitution. In no case, except when public safety is involved, can they be justified in taking the lead. They are the chief guardians of the Constitution. The Constitution is violated or strained in this country when action is taken for which there is no reasonably analogous precedent. Considerations of this kind ought to influence powerfully the present Government.

"It is said that the honour of the House of Commons is concerned. This is an empty phrase. The tribunal, whatever its decision, will not prevent the Irish constituencies from returning as representatives the parties implicated. In such an event the honour of the House of Commons could

only be vindicated by repeated expulsion, followed by disfranchisement. Does any reasonable person contemplate such a course?

"The proceedings of the tribunal cannot be final. In the event of a decision to the effect that the charges are not established, proceedings for libel against the newspaper might be resorted to, the newspaper being placed under a most grossly unjust disadvantage. In the event of a decision to the contrary effect, a criminal prosecution would seem to be imperative. Regarded from the high ground of State policy in Ireland, such a prosecution would probably be replete with danger and disaster.

"These reflections have been sketched out concisely. If submitted to a statesman, or to anyone of great legal learning and attainments, many more and much graver reflections would probably be suggested.

"I do not examine the party aspects of the matter; I only remark that the fate of the Union may be determined by the abnormal proceedings of an abnormal tribunal. Prudent politicians would hesitate to go out of their way to play such high stakes as these. R. H. S. C.

"July 17, 1888."

The memorandum had no effect upon the action of the Government; they drove through the House of Commons by guillotine closure a Bill for the establishment of the Commission; and when the report of the Commission came before the House of Commons, the Government confined themselves in their resolution to an adoption of the report of the Judges in the following terms:

"This House deems it to be a duty to record its reprobation of the true charges of the gravest description, based on private and public documentary evidence, which have been proved against members of this House and other persons; and, while declaring its satisfaction at the exposure of twin conspiracies, the one treasonable and the other criminal, to which fifty-two members of this House have been parties, this House expresses its profound

sorrow for the wrong inflicted and the suffering and loss endured by the loyal minority in Ireland, through a protracted period, by reason of these acts of flagrant iniquity."

"The feeling", writes Mr. Winston Churchill in the biography of his father, "that some reparation was due to men against whom a charge of complicity in murder had been falsely preferred, and who had been pursued by such unwonted means, was by no means confined to the Opposition." But the Government were resolved to brazen it out, and the party machinery, local and national, held firm.

Rift in the "Fourth Party"

Mr. Lewis Jennings, who had been one of the faithful few who still supported Lord Randolph, had taken action, and had put upon the notice paper an amendment to the motion of the Government in these terms: "And further, this House deems it to be its duty to record its condemnation of the conduct of those who are responsible for the accusations of complicity in murder brought against members of this House, discovered to be based mainly on forged letters and declared by the Special Commission to be forgeries."

Undoubtedly Lord Randolph had been favourable at first to the amendment, but on reconsideration, and possibly in face of the now violent feeling against him of his own Party, he "funked" the amendment and asked Jennings to withdraw it. But Jennings was an obstinate and a courageous man; he refused to withdraw the amendment. Lord Randolph, under the circumstances, resolved to speak before the time came for the Jennings amendment.

I go to Mr. Churchill's biography of his father for a

description of the scene, though I remember it myself as distinctly as though it were but yesterday:

"He was heard by the House in a strained, unusual silence, which seemed to react upon him; for he spoke with strange slowness, deliberation and absence of passion —like a judge deciding on a point of law, and without any of the lightness and humour of old Opposition days. He examined the question frigidly and with severity—how the Government had discarded the ordinary tribunals of the land; how they had instituted a special tribunal wherein the functions of judge and jury were cumulated upon three individuals; how the persons implicated had had no voice in the constitution of that tribunal; how they were in part the political opponents of the Government of the day; and how one result had been to levy upon both parties to the action a heavy pecuniary fine. All these things were described in the same even, passionless voice, and heard by the House with undiminished attention and by the Ministerial supporters with growing resentment. Presently came a pause. He asked those about him for a glass of water. Not a man moved. Fancying he had not been heard, he asked again: and so bitter was party passion that even this small courtesy was refused. At length, seeing how the matter stood, Mr. Baumann, a young Conservative member from below the gangway, went out for some. As he returned, the Irish—always so quick to perceive a small personal incident—greeted him with a half-sympathetic, half-ironical cheer, and Lord Randolph, taking the glass from his hand, said solemnly and elaborately in a penetrating undertone: 'I hope this will not compromise you with your party.'"

All this the House listened to quietly, but whether it was because of the eagerness to hear him or because of the seriousness with which he spoke, all demonstration of assent or dissent was stilled. Meantime the passion which, in his already opening hours of physical decay, Lord Randolph could not control, got complete posses-

sion of him. He began to speak more loudly: " 'The procedure which we are called upon to stamp with our approval to-night is a procedure which would undoubtedly have been gladly resorted to by the Tudors and their judges. It is a procedure of an arbitrary and tyrannical character, used against individuals who are political opponents of the Government of the day—procedure such as Parliament has for generations and centuries struggled against and resisted—procedure such as we had hoped, in these happy days, Parliament had triumphantly overcome. It is a procedure such as would have startled even Lord Eldon; it is procedure such as Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham would have protested against; it is procedure which, if that great lawyer Earl Cairns had been alive, the Tory Party would never have carried. But a Nemesis awaits a Government that adopts unconstitutional methods.

" 'What', he asked, 'has been the result of this uprootal of constitutional practice? What has been the one result?' " And then came the awful passage at which the House shuddered—at which I may say I shudder still. " 'What', he said, 'has been the one result?' Then in a fierce whisper"—I again quote Mr. Winston Churchill, whose description of the incident corresponds to my own clear memory— "hissing through the House, 'Pigott!'—then in an outburst of uncontrollable passion and disgust —'a man, a thing, a reptile, a monster—Pigott.' " There was one other term which Lord Randolph used, and which his son does not reproduce. The full phrase is given in the memorandum of Mr. Jennings: "the bloody, rotten, ghastly fœtus".

At first there was some doubt as to what word Lord Randolph had used, for by the time he got to the end of his sentence his voice had become low and almost in-

audible. When the word was repeated and realized, there was a horrible spell of incredulity and shock over the whole House.

Mr. Lewis Jennings attacks Lord Randolph

The effect of this speech upon the House was, of course, immense. It had an especially cruel effect on Mr. Jennings; he regarded himself as betrayed by Churchill, and determined to vindicate and to avenge himself. His opportunity for addressing the House with effectiveness had gone, for it cleared in relief after the terrible episode of Lord Randolph's astounding speech.

Churchill saw the difficulty in which he had placed his loyal supporter; he sent to Jennings two pencil notes, written on slips torn from the Order Paper. Jennings put them carefully away, "and", adds Mr. Winston Churchill, "they have drifted here, like the wreckage tossed up on the shore long after a ship has foundered: 'I hope you will reflect before making any public attack upon me. It would be a thousand pities to set all the malicious tongues wagging, when later you will understand what my position was.' " The second note was: "How can you so wilfully misunderstand my action and so foolishly give way to temper in dealing with grave political matters?"

The speech of Mr. Jennings was almost as exciting to the House as that of Lord Randolph. He made a violent attack on Lord Randolph, to whom he had been so faithful a friend. "The noble Lord", he said, "has a genius for surprises: sometimes he surprises his opponents; sometimes he takes his best friends unawares." And then he would not move his amendment, because he wanted to dissociate himself from any attempt "to stab his party in the back".

The two old friends were never reconciled, Mr. Jennings rejecting all Lord Randolph's approaches. As Mr. Winston Churchill well puts it: "On that exciting night in March Lord Randolph Churchill had only five years to live. But Mr. Jennings had less than three." And that night saw practically the end of the career of Mr. Jennings; the encounter with Lord Randolph ended his interest in politics, and his last years were poisoned by an internal malady. He was only 56 when he died, somewhat suddenly.

Public Honours for Parnell, 1889

I return to the fortunes of Parnell. This was the moment when he reached his triumph. Lest I should be regarded as exaggerating these scenes because of my allegiance to Parnell, I quote from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then under the editorship of Mr. Stead:

"I have no more questions to ask you, Mr. Parnell," said the Attorney-General on May 7. And no sooner was the cross-examination over than Mr. Parnell was elected an honorary life member of the National Liberal Club—a club which, strangely enough, he was to denounce one day as the hot-bed of English dictation—and was voted the freedom of the City of Edinburgh, an honour of which he was presently to be stripped on the motion of those who had first proposed it. Indeed, from the day when Pigott absconded, a kind of personal *Schwärmerei* set in for Mr. Parnell. The Irish leader has of late spoken with contempt and indignation of Irishmen who accept English hospitality. But the remarkable scene when Mr. Parnell was entertained for the second time at the Eighty Club on March 8, 1889, will not soon be forgotten. 'Quietly and unostentatiously', wrote the *Pall Mall Gazette's* representative, 'Mr. Parnell walked up to his seat—accompanied the while by deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. He began to sit down, but, looking round at his

immediate neighbours, he saw Lord Spencer. The thought transferred itself from one to the other, and, stretching across Lord Rosebery and the Chairman, the "Red Earl" and the "Uncrowned King" shook hands. It was the shaking of hands between two nations, the burying of the historic animosities of England, the last consecrating touch to those life-long efforts, sometimes only partial in their effect, but always sincere in their intention, by which Mr. Gladstone had sought to pacify Ireland and consolidate the Empire.'"

A few days later a yet more remarkable scene occurred. It was on the occasion of a great Liberal gathering held in Mr. Parnell's honour in the St. James's Hall—the very place which, eighteen months later, was to ring with denunciations of his wrongdoing.

"Mr. Parnell rose pale and tall"—I quote again from the *Pall Mall Gazette* report, March 14—"with his left arm in a sling, a great white flower in his button-hole, and confronted the audience. In a moment everyone was up, and for the next five minutes St. James's Hall was even as Exeter Hall when the Salvation Army has a field day. Cheer followed cheer in endless succession. The whole hall was white with handkerchiefs. Ladies waved their scarves and cheered; then waved their scarves and cheered again, as if they would never stop."

Parnell at Hawarden

But perhaps the position of Mr. Parnell as English hero was manifested most clearly of all at a soirée of the Women's Liberal Association, held at the Grosvenor Gallery a few months later, in the summer of 1889. Both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell were present, but the latter was as much the lion of the evening as the former. The affectionate interest taken in the Irish leader (wrote a representative of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 23) was the

most notable, because the most novel, feature of the evening. He never showed his head for a moment above the crowd without calling forth cheers; and two or three gentlemen who were temporarily mistaken for him seemed considerably surprised at the warmth of their reception. "There he is," "There he goes," one heard on all sides. "Mr. Parnell, I *must* shake hands with you," they said; and "*I* managed to shake his hand," was the proud boast afterwards. "How ill he looks," said this one; "But how refined," said the other.

I may add that public bodies tumbled over each other in the desire to do him honour. There was a fierce and prolonged struggle, with the Lord Provost among the opponents, in the City Council of Edinburgh, but in the end he received the freedom of the city, and got a great reception when he went to take it up.

It was about this time that Parnell paid a visit, at the invitation of Mr. Gladstone, to Hawarden. They had apparently a very friendly and favourable interview. One of the incidents reported is that, discussing the art of acting with Gladstone's daughter, in answer to her question who was the greatest actor he had ever seen, Parnell replied: "Your father", a reply which sent the young lady into fits of laughter.

I saw him immediately after this interview, in Liverpool (where he also got a rapturous reception), and he somehow or other seemed to me inclined to be a little reserved in reference to the interview; I got the idea then that he was not altogether satisfied. This interview will figure very largely in the hideous struggle which very shortly afterwards came between Parnell and his own followers.

CHAPTER X

New Tipperary—Irish mission to America—My last friendly meeting with Parnell—Irish-American enthusiasm—Gladstone's letter and Parnell's manifesto—A sad journey to Chicago—Meeting where we did not declare ourselves—Tragic figure of Parnell's mother.

The Landlord of Old Tipperary

THE resources of the Irish Party had been seriously drained by the enormous expenses connected with the Plan of Campaign, and still more with the starting of what came to be known as "New Tipperary". Tipperary was a fairly prosperous town in the county of the same name; there was a fierce dispute between Mr. Smith Barry—afterwards Lord Barrymore—and his tenants, and in order to bring the landlord to his knees, Mr. William O'Brien and others started a movement to leave the old town for a new one. In entering upon this fight with Mr. Smith Barry, sufficient account was not taken of the courage, firmness, and obstinacy of that gentleman. He did not much look the part, for he was a man who seemed a good deal more a careless and impassive dandy, with a certain look of irony in his face, than the doughty fighter he proved to be.

He had a large property; though he was descended on the wrong side of the blanket from his grandfather, he inherited his estates. He added probably to his great wealth by marrying a very wealthy American widow. Had you taken a cursory look at him as he sat discreetly in the House of Commons, you would have regarded him, with his handsome, ironical face, as the last person to enter on one of the deadliest Irish struggles, with his

property and even his life at stake; but he declined to make any compromise, and the fight went on, with much bad blood and much financial loss both on the one side and the other. I may dismiss Mr. Smith Barry from these pages by saying that finally he succeeded in reviving the title, and became a Member of the House of Lords.

It was partly to meet this situation that it was resolved to send a large and important delegation of the Irish members to the United States. The members of the delegation were Mr. Dillon, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. T. D. Sullivan, Mr. T. Harrington, Mr. T. P. Gill, and myself.

Before we left for America it was thought desirable that some of us should have an interview with Parnell. I look back upon that interview with a sense of inexpressible sorrow. It was the last time that I spoke to Parnell in friendship. (I saw him once again, and the meeting made any further intercourse between him and me impossible.) Our interview took place in one of the rooms of the library of the House of Commons. I never saw Parnell look so composed, and in some respects never so healthy since his early manhood. It is true that the years of frightful working, and the corroding anxieties of his position with Mrs. O'Shea, had changed the face from the fullness of early years; but though the face was thin it looked healthy and bronzed with country air and exercise; and though already the petition of Captain O'Shea for divorce had been lodged and published, he seemed perfectly composed and quite fearless as to the future.

Parnell before the Tragedy

He was extremely friendly in bearing towards the little deputation; expressed no particular views as to what we should say. He knew he could trust us all on that point,

and there was no reference on either the one side or the other to the black cloud that had already begun to form itself over his head. I remember it was a fine day; the view from the library on to the broad and silvery waters of the Thames at that particular point gave a certain touching beauty to the fateful interview. The whole scene was transformed also by the fact that, as the House was on vacation, we spoke—in a usually crowded and noisy chamber—in the midst of solitude and silence.

We went to America under conditions which, except for the anxious apprehensions as to the coming divorce case, seemed in every way favourable. The triumph of Parnell in the forgery case; the growth of his power; the diminution of the majority of the Tory Government; above all, the exciting incidents in Ireland, especially in New Tipperary, all covered our brows with the laurels of great victories in the past and greater victories in the future. In short, the near advent of the final success of our cause in the passing of Home Rule, under the leadership of Gladstone and in the new Parliament, with at least a majority, was plainly indicated by the decrease in the strength of the Tory Party and the universal disgust which had come over most of the English people by the cruelties and horrors of the Coercion regime.

We first addressed a big meeting in New York, at which we all appeared. Never had I seen such enthusiasm; never a gathering where the determination of our hearers to give us every possible support was more emphatically demonstrated. Mr. Hill, the Governor of the State, was in the Chair. Every man of Irish birth who held any position in the affairs of the State was present. The real proof, however, of the position of immense strength our Party then occupied in Irish America was shown when the subscriptions came to be called for. Man after man got up to an-

nounce his name and to add his subscription of a thousand dollars (£200); the tide rolled on and on, until at last a sum of nearly £8000 was subscribed at that single meeting.

We then divided our forces, some going to one State and some to another. At every town we visited there was the same scene of wild enthusiasm, the same outpouring of subscriptions. I think I do not exaggerate when I say that if things had gone right we should have come back to Ireland with a fund of £200,000, or even more, and with that gigantic fund we should have won everywhere, perhaps even in New Tipperary.

A Bolt from the Blue

And in the midst of this enormous and unparalleled triumph came the publication of the proceedings in the Divorce Court. It was a staggering thunderbolt from a sky of blazing sunshine. I need not dilate upon the feelings of distress and almost of despair with which this news came upon us; and it came upon us in a full tide. The American papers, realizing the gigantic issues that lay behind this single case, were full every day with pages about the Irish situation and the divorce case. In addition, through my friendship with the late Mr. John Mackay, one of the proprietors of the great Cable Company, we were privileged to see the latest news even before it appeared in the newspapers. We went down to the central office of this great Cable agency, and the despatches were read to us hot after their arrival. We were as well aware of what was taking place in Committee Room 15, the scene of the historic struggle between Parnell and his Party, as though we were present. Would that we had been! The story might have been different if the influence of two such important men as Dillon and O'Brien had been used in that cause of com-

promise in which lay the chance of successful ending of this tragic affair.

The first news of the speeches made it clear to us that compromise was being rendered hourly more difficult. In a sentence from a speech of Mr. Barry, an old and faithful member of the Party, it was thrown at Parnell, and thrown back by Parnell, that Mr. Barry was a "leader-killer"—at the first hearing we thought it was "lady-killer", which would have been even worse; but at the first echoes of this angry speech we began to feel that the case was hopeless.

But before this Mr. Dillon and I, and I think one of the others of the delegation, had met in New York; I was still strongly and hotly hoping that we could stand by Parnell. I wrote a telegram, the terms of which I recall: "We stand firmly by the leadership of the man who has brought the Irish people through unparalleled difficulties and dangers, from servitude and despair to the very threshold of emancipation, with a genius, courage, and success unequalled in our history. We do so, not only on the ground of gratitude for those imperishable services in the past, but in the profound conviction that Parnell's statesmanship and matchless qualities as a leader are essential to the safety of our cause."

I must confess that then, as indeed during most of my life, I was at a disadvantage in comparison with my colleagues. I had lived in England unbrokenly for year after year, and was only brought into touch with Ireland during my occasional visits (which took place every year, of course, for consultations and meetings), and therefore I was not as well informed upon purely Irish feelings as were my colleagues. They all, I think, approved of the telegram, though Mr. Dillon, who had always known more about Irish feeling than any of his contemporaries, shook his head with some doubt and with far larger and truer view

of the complexities of the case than I could pretend to have. The telegram was read at a meeting held in Leinster Hall, at which the chief speech was made by Mr. Healy, and which also was a strong and emphatic endorsement of Parnell's leadership. Mr. Healy's view was summed up in the famous phrase that became a slogan: "Don't speak to the man at the wheel!" I shall have to refer to this meeting a little later on.

On the Way to Chicago

As the days passed, and when Gladstone's letter appeared indicating his inability to act with Parnell if he were retained in the Irish leadership, our anxieties grew deeper and deeper. Meantime we were all bound to go to Chicago together—one of the greatest and most important centres of Irish population in the United States. We agreed that we should all meet together from the different States to which we had assigned ourselves, at Cincinnati, and have a consultation there on the situation before setting out for Chicago. We knew that in Chicago we should get into a mine of explosives; the Irish population there were of a sturdy and fierce determination. They were already terribly divided by an internal struggle over the foul assassination of a leading citizen, Dr. Cronin. We felt just like miners going down to a mine where men's lives were in deadly peril from gas or upheavals. We had held a hot, feverish, anxious consultation, but by the night of the day before we started for Chicago we had arrived at no conclusion.

The first thing that was handed to us on the morning of our departure for Chicago, and as we were taking our seats in the train, was the famous manifesto which Parnell had issued in reply to the letter of Mr. Gladstone.

This manifesto produced an immediate and disastrous effect. Mr. Dillon gave voice to his feelings first, and declared that it would be impossible for him to support a leader who had issued so flagrantly dishonest a document. His opinion, and also mine, was that the charge in that manifesto of the want of good faith on the part of Gladstone was simply a dexterous expedient of Parnell's to shift the controversy over his condemnation in the Divorce Court to political lines, and to appeal to that suspicion of English statesmen and policies which was ingrained in the Irish heart, and which, though flagrantly palpably wrong in the case of Gladstone, was too well grounded in previous experiences of Irish history. Parnell wanted to suggest that this was another example of that flagrant and shameless breach of all pledges.

This was my impression, too, of the document; I think it made a like impression on Mr. O'Brien. But at once there came the first and affrighting glimpse of that division of opinion, and afterwards of course of act, in the whole Irish nation, and first of all in the Irish Party. Mr. T. D. Sullivan, who had never loved Parnell, and who was a typically good family man with a large number of children, one of whom was the wife of Mr. T. M. Healy, expressed his feelings by speaking of Parnell as "a base adulterer". Mr. Dillon, who took a larger view, replied that he wished that was the only issue between Parnell and us.

Mr. Harrington, on the other hand, immediately took up the side of Parnell; spoke movingly of the effects that would come from abandoning the leadership of so great a chief; and was moved to tears as he spoke. Mr. Gill, then as throughout, took up a position of neutrality.

It was in this chaotic state of mind, with all kinds of internal tremors and misgivings, that we approached that terrible city where division was also inevitable, and where

such division might end in riot and even in bloodshed. It was agreed among us that our business was all to get through that first terrible meeting without expressing our opinions.

Delegates who kept their own Counsel

The hall was densely packed: five to ten thousand people must have been there—excitement in every face. You will easily judge of the painful thrill with which I picked out at once, in this sea of faces, one in particular. It was a face long but perfectly oval. The eyes were glittering, blue-green and inscrutable, the complexion somewhat sea-green also. It was, I saw at once, the mother of Parnell. Those strange eyes of hers were fixed on every one of us; they asked of every one of us, without the necessity of her moving her lips, the question which at that moment was wringing her heart: Were we to declare for or against her son? We had determined, as has been seen, to give no answer to that question; but at the end, as at the beginning, there was nothing in the face to express any emotion. She might have been bitterly disappointed; she might have secretly rejoiced that at least there was some doubt left as to whether we should be enemies or friends, but the pale, impassive face with the glittering eyes remained enigmatic to the end.

This meeting was on Saturday night. On the Sunday morning we got a too painful, tragic, and yet in its way comic, manifestation of how deeply Chicago was already divided by another issue. There were two factions in the city among the Fenians, led in each case by resolute men. Between these factions a dispute had been started with regard to the use of the gigantic funds that had been contributed by the Irish-Americans.

One faction was led by a man called Alexander Sullivan,

one of the strangest figures I ever met even among the crowded gallery of remarkable personalities in the movement both in Ireland and in America. He was a thin, pale man, with a tranquil, not to say impassive, face; willowy and almost feeble in physique, but, as was proved on more than one occasion in his life, with an iron nerve and a ruthless, and indeed even ferocious though cold, temper behind the delicate physique. He was the man chiefly attacked, and the allegation—whether true or false I am unable to say—was that he had gambled in wheat on the Board of Trade (as the bourse for wheat is called in Chicago) with the funds of the organization of which he was president—had lost, and had paid his losses with the funds of the organization.

One of the leaders of the Party against him was Dr. Cronin, a fiery, loud-spoken, and merciless enemy of Sullivan. Dr. Cronin was missed one day; after some days of search his dead and butchered body was found in the waters of one of the Chicago rivers; and the cry was immediately raised that he had been murdered, and murdered under the orders of Alexander Sullivan. After some time several men were brought to trial on the charge of having committed or being accessory to the murder. The verdict went against one of the accused, and he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

The Fenians of Chicago

This fierce division pursued us in all our subsequent proceedings; it extended even to the churches. We, of course, could take no sides on this issue, knowing nothing of the facts on either side, and therefore we were obliged to take up an attitude of severe neutrality. This attitude had to be maintained even in our choice of a place of

worship on Sunday morning; the Fenian faction on one side was known as the "Triangle", that on the other side as the "Anti-Triangle"; Triangle being the name which was given to the small body of officers who controlled one of the organizations. So some of us went to the "Triangle" and some to the "Anti-Triangle" churches.

We had still, however, the terrible task to face of writing the manifesto which would proclaim to the Irish people the attitude we were taking up on the challenge of Parnell. We retired into our different rooms, each to draft what he regarded as the form the manifesto should take. After a couple of hours we produced our manifestoes, and ultimately agreed on one which was taken here from one draft and there from another. So our position was defined. Mr. Harrington did not sign the manifesto. It was our declaration of war against Parnell.

And then came one of the characteristic episodes of American life. As I have said, our progress through America up to this moment had been a triumphant procession, with crowded and enthusiastic meetings and an abounding overflow of subscriptions. The action of the guillotine was not more prompt or killing than that of this outbreak of dissension in Ireland upon our mission. I had an idea that I still might be able to raise some money, and I made still more journeys and addressed several meetings with this view. But they were all failures, and whenever I got in private among Irishmen I found a violent division of opinion—some of the Irishmen were anti-Parnellite, some as fiercely Parnellite.

I found also traces of that extraordinary exchange of what would be called in the East "gossip of the bazaar", and a forecast of the bitterness of language which would accompany these tragic developments.

I remember, as I was visiting a mine in the State of

Montana, a young Irishman who was accompanying me suddenly bursting into a tirade in favour of Parnell; and there was scarcely one of Parnell's opponents against whom this gentleman had not indexed a series of accusations. The purport of it was that there was nobody without sin among them, and none had the right to cast a stone at Parnell.

Break-up of the American Mission

Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and myself got back to New York. There we received almost hourly telegrams from home; I remember one telegram in particular; it came from an old and brilliant member of our Party—Mr. Matty Bodkin. The telegram remains in my memory because there I found a phrase for the first time indicating not our united Party, but the Party of our enemies and of Parnell's. In this telegram the followers of Parnell were described as Parnellites, no longer as a term of eulogy, but of refutation. I remember another telegram of the period, also because of the use of a word which indicated one of Parnell's audacious lines of attack. He spoke of the majority which had voted against him as the "seceders". The "seceders", I might incidentally note, meant not the minority which had supported him, but the majority which had rejected his leadership. It was characteristic of the ingenuity and audacity with which Parnell could shift the issue.

I had, to tell the truth, no desire to return to Ireland and to get into that hideous campaign of mixed truth and calumny to which the struggle had been reduced. But meantime events had not paused. First there was an urgent appeal for Mr. O'Brien to return, and Mr. O'Brien went to Boulogne, where the afterwards famous negotiations between Parnell and his colleagues took place. Immediately on his arrival Mr. O'Brien began to send cablegrams to

us; and then came another telegram appealing for the immediate presence of Mr. Dillon. Mr. Dillon also went to Boulogne; and I was left alone, the solitary and the desolate figure out of that band of enthusiastic men who, a few weeks before, had been acclaimed as the coming victors in the last great fight for Ireland's liberty.

I could see all around me the fatal extension of the conflict at home to our race in America. Even the porters in the hotels, who had been profuse in their kindly attention to us before the *débâcle*, now turned on us surly looks.

And now to an account of what had been taking place during these dreadful months at the other side of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER XI

The gathering of the storm—Divorce decree pronounced—The Nonconformist conscience—Spence Watson, W. T. Stead, and Hugh Price Hughes—Gladstone's letter—Morley's search for Parnell—The party meeting—Parnell re-elected leader—His references to the divorce—Irish members learn of Gladstone's letter.

The Divorce Decree pronounced, November 17, 1890

THERE were signs from the first that Parnell was going to make a bid to continue the leadership. On the very morning that the first day's proceedings in the Divorce Court were published, and Ireland learned with humiliation some of the particulars in O'Shea's petition, and with amazement that Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea were not contesting the suit, Parnell's summons to the Irish Party for the opening of the Parliamentary session a week later was published in the *Freeman's Journal.* "I wish to lay special stress", he said, "upon the necessity for the attendance of every man upon the opening day, as it is unquestionable that the coming session will be one of combat from first to last, and that great issues depend upon its course."

On the following morning, which brought the second day's proceedings and the verdict, the London correspondent of the *Freeman's Journal*—who, as I have pointed out, was so often the conveying instrument of Parnell's wishes to Ireland—had this paragraph in his "London Letter"—

"I have direct authority for stating that Mr. Parnell has not the remotest intention of abandoning either permanently or temporarily his position or his duties as

leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. This may be implicitly accepted as Mr. Parnell's firm resolution, and perhaps by learning it in time the Pigottist Press may be spared the humiliation of indulging in a prolonged outburst of useless vilification. In arriving at this determination, I need not say that Mr. Parnell is actuated exclusively by a sense of his responsibility to the Irish people, by whose suffrages he holds his public position, and who alone have the power and the right to influence his public action."

Nine days before the divorce proceedings, Mr. Morley, in his rooms in Brighton, had interviewed Parnell, who led him to believe that he would come triumphant out of the unpleasant business in court. "The other side", Parnell said to him, "do not know what a broken-kneed horse they are riding." The decree was pronounced on Monday, November 17. Mr. Morley expected word from Parnell, but there was none. Morley was now charged with a communication from Gladstone, and on Saturday, November 22, he sought an interview through Parnell's secretary. On Sunday evening Mr. Campbell went to Morley's house. Morley begged him to tell his chief that Gladstone was coming to London on the following day, and that it was most important that Morley should have communication with Parnell before the annual meeting of the Irish Party on Tuesday, the opening day of the session. Mr. Campbell told Morley that Parnell was at Brighton, but that he would deliver Morley's request to him the next day, and that there would be word from Parnell by Tuesday afternoon.

The National Liberal Federation

Meantime, on the Sunday before the fateful meeting of the Irish Party when Parnell's re-election was to be

considered, there had been another and very portentous outburst of that revolt against Parnell's leadership by Nonconformists on moral grounds. Those were the days when the "Nonconformist conscience" passed into the vocabulary, and became one of the factors that were practically omnipotent over the ranks of the Liberal Party. It was really the Nonconformist conscience that contributed most on the English side to the revolt against Parnell.

The manifestations of this feeling showed themselves in a prompt and fierce form. Its strength and its virulence came, somewhat as a surprise, in a shape more formidable than Mr. Morley anticipated when he went down to the meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Sheffield. The leader of this annual and almost law-giving body of the Nonconformists was Mr. Spence Watson. Mr. Spence Watson, though he lived at Newcastle, was to a certain extent one of the most potent national leaders of the Liberals outside Parliament. He was a very honest, a very able, a very indulgent man. Unlike so many other leading Nonconformists of the time, he not only shared, but he glorified, the pleasures of the wine-cup. He was in the habit of quoting the famous verse of Omar Khayyam in praise of the wine-cup; I even heard him say, as he sat down to dinner and a bottle of wine at the National Liberal Club one day, words that indicated his entire accord with the Persian poet in regarding the wine-cup as the one thing in life that never disappointed.

Indulgent, and laughingly expressing accord with this entirely un-puritan view, he became on the moral sexual question as puritan as the ultra-puritans of his Party and his creed. This man of the Unitarian community—the one section credited with being rather larger-minded than other Nonconformist communions—would

have led one to expect that on the Parnell case, painful as it was, he might have taken a somewhat moderate line. But he did not. Shortly after my return from America, Mr. Morley spoke to me with emphasis, almost with passion, of the scene that took place between him and Spence Watson when Morley arrived at Sheffield. He described and almost reproduced in his own features and language the passion that was in the face and in the words of Spence Watson. The scene was evidently something of a surprise and even a shock. What Spence Watson had said, however, indubitably represented the opinion of the overwhelming majority of these delegates, who were the centre of the Liberal army.

The Nonconformist Conscience

Some Liberal politicians took a different view, and a very able Scotsman—though a Presbyterian, I fancy he was rather inclined to Agnosticism, and had the usual coolness of the Scottish temperament—afterwards denounced to me the action of the Nonconformists as entirely devoid of anything like serious political calculation. But a man like this—at least at the moment—was in a hopeless minority. If there had been any inclination to consider the case of Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea with anything like the cool calculation which all mixed political situations require, that hope was destroyed, deliberately perhaps, by what might be called the ultra-puritanical section, led by such wayward and uncompromising puritans as Mr. W. T. Stead and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

I have already given a rapid sketch of the good and the bad sides of Mr. Stead; on all sexual questions he was almost a monomaniac. For a time, through the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he had regarded it as his sacred

duty to track down any offence against sexual morality which was reported to him, and he had apparently assumed the position that as a moral inquisitor he could bring to sexual purity not merely all politicians, but almost all men. He had already driven Dilke out of political life. I have previously told how, years before the ultimate exposure, he had made my blood run cold when he put to me the question whether it was not his duty to break up the Irish Party by the revelation of the liaison between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea. It need scarcely be said that, when the crisis came, the voice of Stead was the loudest and shrillest among those who demanded the expulsion of Parnell from the leadership of the Irish Party.

There was another voice at the time nearly as powerful and quite as strident as that of Mr. Stead. This was the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Hugh Price Hughes was a Nonconformist clergyman. He had spent several years of his life in the noble though not very hopeful mission of converting the sinners—especially the female sinners—of the West End, and his mind was, naturally, steeped in sexual aberrations as the chief cause of that hideous welter of coarse debauchery and dreadful victimisation of the hapless women that strolled the streets of the West End to buy bread and bed by the sale of their bodies. He was not satisfied with denouncing Parnell's own act of sexual irregularity, but he turned on the Irish people themselves, and he committed himself to the statement that Ireland would be an unclean nation if it compromised on such a question. To say the least of these pronouncements, they did not help.

Meantime the ecclesiastical authorities of Ireland had remained silent; they, of course, knew the difficulties better than the Nonconformist leaders. They knew the insoluble problems that would be brought into existence

by a split in the Irish ranks. They paused—I think now they rightly paused—they did not show their hand until it was forced by the pushing to the front by the Liberal Nonconformists and zealots of the moral as the supreme and practically only issue. They did at last agree upon a manifesto, some days later than the re-election of Parnell; it was a strong pronouncement against him, and added powerfully to the many forces that led to Parnell's destruction.

Mr. Gladstone's Letter, November 24, 1890

The address of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes took place on the Sunday before the meeting of the Irish Party, and undoubtedly helped to produce the resentment at English interference which was one of the main weapons in Parnell's subsequent campaign. But there was an even more deadly intervention, and that was the famous letter of Mr. Gladstone. It was written to Mr. Morley, and has been already alluded to. This is the letter:

"Having arrived at a certain conclusion with regard to the continuance at the present moment of Mr. Parnell's leadership of the Irish Party, I have seen Mr. M'Carthy on my arrival in town, and have inquired from him whether I was likely to receive from Mr. Parnell himself any communication on the subject. Mr. M'Carthy replied that he was unable to give me any communication on the subject. I mentioned to him that in 1882, after the terrible murder in the Phoenix Park, Mr. Parnell, although totally removed from any idea of responsibility, had spontaneously written to me and offered to take the Chiltern Hundreds, an offer much to his honour, but one which I thought it my duty to decline.

"While clinging to the hope of communication from Mr Mr. Parnell to whomsoever addressed, I thought it necessary, viewing the arrangements for the commencement of the session to-morrow, to acquaint Mr. M'Carthy with the

conclusion at which, after using all the means of observation and reflection in my power, I had myself arrived. It was that, notwithstanding the splendid services rendered by Mr. Parnell to his country, his continuance at the present moment in the leadership would be productive of consequences disastrous in the highest degree to the cause of Ireland.

"I think I may be warranted in asking you so far to expand the conclusion I have given above as to add that the continuance I speak of would not only place many hearty and effective friends of the Irish cause in a position of great embarrassment, but would render my retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party, based as it has been mainly on the presentation of the Irish cause, almost a nullity.

"This explanation of my own view I begged Mr. M'Carthy to regard as confidential, and not intended for his colleagues generally, if he found that Mr. Parnell contemplated spontaneous action. But I also begged that he would make known to the Irish Party at their meeting to-morrow afternoon that such was my conclusion if he should find that Mr. Parnell had not in contemplation any step of the nature indicated.

"I now write to you in case Mr. M'Carthy should be unable to communicate with Mr. Parnell, as I understand you may possibly have an opening to-morrow through another channel. Should you have such an opening, I would beg you to make known to Mr. Parnell the conclusion itself which I have stated in the earlier part of this letter. I have thought it best to put it in terms simple and direct, much as I should have desired, had it been within my power, to alleviate the painful nature of the situation. As respects the manner of conveying what my public duty has made it an obligation to say, I rely entirely on your good feeling, tact, and judgment."

From Morley's *Recollections* it appears that Gladstone put in the decisive paragraph threatening his resignation at the instance of Harcourt and Morley, and after he had drafted the letter without it, Morley had to remind him to

insert it. Gladstone had intended that it should go in as a postscript, but it was transferred by Morley and Harcourt to the body of the letter.

When the Irish Party met on Tuesday and re-elected Parnell, it was in ignorance of this letter of Gladstone. There is little doubt that Parnell deliberately kept out of the way of the knowledge of this letter. Morley had done everything in his power to find Parnell, but Parnell was not to be found.

Morley's Search for Parnell

An important part in this, and in subsequent events, was played by Mr. Campbell, Parnell's secretary. Campbell in himself was not much of a Parliamentarian; he scarcely ever made a speech; his duties as secretary were sufficient explanation of this, and besides, though he could state his case plainly, he certainly had no oratorical abilities. He was a Catholic Ulsterman, and they are not a very tractable race. He had become an important factor in being made Parnell's secretary. He had an intense spirit of devotion and loyalty—both professional and personal—to his chief. He was unable to see in any of his chief's opponents any soundness of judgment or, indeed, honesty of purpose. He watched all the moves in the game both at this moment and for many years with the eyes of a secretary. He was inclined to see a plot against Parnell on small evidence. Every man was judged by him as a personal enemy or a personal friend according to his attitude on the question of Parnell.

I have already told how, when Mr. Campbell thought things were going against Parnell (and perhaps I might add, in favour of Mr. Healy), when we were choosing the candidates for the election of 1885 in a small room at Morrison's Hotel in Dublin, he was in confidential

communication with me—knowing the intensity of my Parnellism—urging me to come over from London to Dublin. Such a man was not the type that could play the part of a useful, impartial, tactful intermediary in such a struggle as that between Parnell and his assailants. He lent himself, I have no doubt, to Parnell's determination to keep out of the way of the Gladstone letter.

On Tuesday morning Morley was watching for Parnell, but could not find him. At half-past eleven Morley had a telegram from Campbell saying that he had not been able to find Parnell, but hoped to see him that day in the House of Commons.

"I immediately applied to Mr. M'Carthy," wrote Morley, in giving an account of the matter, "but he, too, was entirely in the dark, and so were all the other members of the Irish Party then and now supposed to be much in Mr. Parnell's confidence. Before the hour at which the Irish Party were to meet I went down to the House, but the Irish meeting, I rather think, had been accelerated. At any rate, it was over. From the day of the decree down to that time, I had no better means of reaching Mr. Parnell (save those to which I actually resorted) than I have to-day of reaching the man in the moon. I cannot prove that the cutting off of communication was deliberate. It certainly was effectual."

Here, at any rate, was a golden opportunity for Parnell to engage in the game of hide-and-seek to which he was so prone—and which had failed him so badly in his relations with Mrs. O'Shea, for some of the Eltham witnesses had told how the strange gentleman was locally reputed to be Parnell; paragraphs, too, had appeared in the papers telling how he had been the guest of Captain O'Shea (and at that time O'Shea happened to be out of the country), how he had had an accident on horseback at Eltham, and how he was living in another place under the

name of Mr. Preston. Alas for his subterfuges of disguise! —even a great tactician cannot deceive his neighbours. But on this opening day of the session, Parnell did succeed in evading Morley and his scouts.

Parnell re-elected Chairman, November 25, 1890

About two o'clock in the afternoon, when the coast was clear, most of the members having gone to the Upper House in obedience to the summons of Black Rod, Parnell entered the Lobby, called at the post office for his letters, met Mr. M'Carthy—who, as vice-chairman of the Party, was charged with such disconcerting news for him—and the two walked away in close conversation. At half-past two word was passed round among the Irish members that the annual meeting would take place in Committee Room 15 at 2.45. Up to then they had been ignorant of the time of meeting. One of the members, Mr. M. J. Kenny, told afterwards how Parnell's secretary said to him before the meeting: "Morley is searching everywhere through the House for Parnell with a letter from Gladstone, but I will take devilish good care he will not find the Chief, because I will keep him out of the way". Mr. M'Carthy was in possession of the contents of the letter, and stated that he conveyed them to Parnell, who, however, gave no sign to the meeting.

At that time, as I have said, the members knew nothing of the Gladstone letter, and few of them could foresee how closely Parnell's retention of the leadership would be interlocked with the question of Home Rule. And yet, though he was unanimously re-elected leader—as in Butt's day, the sessional chairman was re-elected at the beginning of each session—one member, Mr. Jordan, advised the Chief in a few sentences to reconsider his position. Parnell,

during the stormy debates that came later, upbraided his Party for re-electing him and, having done so, seeking to depose him. But the situation was entirely altered by Gladstone's letter; the fact that he knew it would be so was evident by Parnell's keeping all knowledge of Gladstone's admonition from the Party at that annual meeting. It was a further cause of complaint with members that Mr. Campbell, who as Parnell's secretary might have known, had left some of them with the impression that the Chief would resign if he were re-elected. After Parnell had been declared elected unanimously, he returned thanks, and incidentally made the following allusion to the divorce proceedings—

"I will now lift aside a corner of the curtain, and I can assure you, my friends and colleagues, that in a very short period of time, when I am free to do so, I will be able to put a complexion on this case very different to that which it now bears, and I will then be able to hold my head as high, aye, and higher, than ever before in the face of the world. . . . I will ask my colleagues to remember that only one side of the story has been given to the public. I am accused of breaking up a happy home and of shattering a scene of domestic bliss and felicity. If this case had been gone into and a calculation had been made, it would have been proved that in the twenty-three years of Mr. O'Shea's married life, he spent only four hundred days in his own home. This was the happy home which I am alleged to have destroyed. I am also accused of betraying a friend. Mr. O'Shea was never my friend. Since I first met him in Ennis, in 1880, he was always my enemy—my bitter, relentless enemy. There is the further charge against me that I abused this man's hospitality; but I never partook, at any time, of Mr. O'Shea's hospitality, for I never had bite or sup—never had a glass of wine—at his expense. . . . Now that I have lifted a corner of the curtain, I will only ask you, gentlemen, to keep your lips sealed, as mine are, on what you have heard until the brief period of time

Re-election of Mr. Parnell as Leader of the Irish Party
in Committee Room No. 15, House of Commons, on 25th November 1890

At head, reading from left to right.
J. E. Redmond; J. Tuite; Dr. C. K. D. Tanner; D. Sheehy; J. O'Kelly; T. Sexton; R. Power; Justin M'Carthy; T. Quinn; J. F. X. O'Brien; Daniel Crilly.

At foot, reading from left to right.
Col. J. P. Nolan; Donal Sullivan; Dr. J. E. Kenny; E. Harrington; A. O'Connor; H. Campbell; C. S. Parnell; Dr. A. Commins; Sir T. H. G. Esmonde, Bart.

will have elapsed to which I have referred, when I can vindicate myself, and when you will find that your trust in me has not been misplaced."

Morley and Gladstone were not to be got over so easily as that, and by a series of mishaps the letter found its way to a newspaper office. The Irish members, who late in the evening learned of the letter for the first time, made a despairing appeal to Professor Stuart, M.P., as a journalist, to get the letter back; it was going to the Press, and they whom it most concerned had not seen it. But it is the last cry of despair to ask a journalist to hold up good "news." Professor Stuart returned to the House and told the Irish members that he had been too late, that the Press Association had telegraphed the letter to the papers and it was impossible to stop it. He brought back flimsies of the letter, and there in the Irish Whips' room the Irish members heard Gladstone's letter read to them. It must have sounded to them like the voice of doom.

CHAPTER XII

Committee-Room 15—Mr. Sexton's appeal to Parnell—Parnell's "Manifesto to the Irish people"—Motion for Parnell's deposition—Mr. Healy and Parnell—The first vote: 44 to 29—The deputation to Gladstone—The final breach.

THIRTY-EIGHT years have passed since the sittings of the Irish Party on Parnell's leadership took place in Committee Room 15. Even after that long span, the story will bear retelling, for it was full of drama, of excitement, and, indeed, of pathos. The dilemma in which the Irish Party found itself—the resignation of Gladstone, or the deposing of Parnell—was not one that would resolve itself by a simple yea or nay. It could not be clearly solved, and it left that splendidly disciplined party battered and damaged and disunited.

Committee-Room 15

Surveying the battle-ground at this distance of time, the casual observer will say this might have been done or that might have been avoided; but an understanding of the day-by-day history of the time would show how all things were helping to pile up the tragic situation and make the course of events as they ensued almost inevitable. There was Gladstone's lofty code, which has immaculately withstood the jousts of calumny; and yet he would have held back the decisive threat, it now appears, but for the influence which the hubbub inspired by sinister, self-seeking forces in the Liberal underworld had upon his colleagues Morley and Harcourt, who forced the hand of their

leader. Take with that the long reports of the Divorce Court proceedings, amounting to about thirty columns of *The Times*, and all this pile of matter—Sir Edward Clarke's opening speech, the innumerable querulous letters from O'Shea, O'Shea's self-righteous testimony, the sordid evidence of housekeepers and parlourmaids, stories of locked bedrooms and midnight comings and goings—the whole damning indictment being allowed to pass without being contested.

Add to this that Parnell had given his followers, and the Liberal leaders as well, the impression, even the assurance, that he would triumphantly vindicate himself when the case came on—as he might have done if he had defended the case, for he should have pleaded connivance and desertion. And in earnest of this, since the cause first became known, messages of confidence had been pouring in upon him from every Nationalist body in Ireland. These may have led him to regard his power over the people as unshakable. The fact was, however, that after the exposure—which lacked no detail, although it was not contested—after Gladstone's remonstrance and the publication of his letter, there was Parnell's determination to go on as if nothing had happened. If he could have been induced to lay aside the leadership for a while, it is not too much to say that he could have ruled Ireland from Arabia —whoever might be the stop-gap leader—and come back to the leadership at his pleasure, and more powerful than before. But he would not see things in that light; he was too proud to give way; and there were other factors that helped to keep him stubborn and unrelenting.

"I shall always come where you are," he had said to Mrs. O'Shea on the night before the divorce proceedings. "I shall come to my home every night, whatever happens." Whenever the adjournments of the long sittings in Room

15 permitted it, he went down to Brighton, and the special fire of pugnacity which he displayed in the morning, though the discussion might have been left in an easier position overnight, was attributed to the influence of Mrs. O'Shea. There was, too, his uncompromising secretary, Mr. Henry Campbell, who could not tolerate any point of view but one; and on the other side there were one or two members whose malevolence in controversy would have roused to a fury of indignation far easier opponents than Parnell. And it was, finally, a pity that three of us who would have had an important share in the counsels of the Party—Mr. Dillon, Mr. O'Brien, and myself—should have been at the other end of the earth while this ominous question was being debated by the Party.

Parnell's Obstinate Pride

And here I ought to note two things which contributed to the final disaster. First, the obstinate pride of Parnell, not only inherent in his nature, but added to by his extraordinary omnipotence for years, which produced something like megalomania. There is a well-known story from the days before he entered politics, of the obstinacy with which he carried on a controversy with regard to some twopenny-ha'penny affair at a cricket match. He almost broke up his cricket club because he could not be got to yield in the perfectly trifling dispute. He claimed that as captain of the Wicklow team he had won the toss, and because the rival captain disputed this, he refused to allow his own team to play the match.

When I met Parnell first he was a modest man, with very modest hopes for his future. As we entered one night the Westminster Palace Hotel—where we both at the time lived—he said to me, apparently with the utmost serious-

ness, when I began talking to him about his future, that he thought he had got as far as he ever could get. I do not think it was affectation.

I think the change that came in him in later years was due not entirely to the wonderful position to which he had attained, but to a certain indifference to political fame or position. The state of his mind at that early epoch was illustrated to me in a curious way. We had in the course of the evening in the House of Commons got into one of our first collisions with Gladstone—an outburst from Gladstone which seemed to be disproportionate to the occasion, and was made in his then sublime ignorance of what a determined Irish Party could do. In that outburst Gladstone warned Parnell that though he was an old man and Parnell a young one, such a collision between Parnell and the great forces against him might end in disaster for Parnell.

"Did you see", said Parnell to me, "the 'puss' that Gladstone had on him?" I was surprised to hear the sedate and lofty Parnell descend to such a phrase. It means for Irishmen the pursing up of the lips that shows indignation ; it is never used in polite circles or in polite conversation ; it is a popular word, and the issue of such a word from the lips of the austere Parnell struck me as so comical that I burst out laughing. At the same time it showed Parnell's consideration of this somewhat stormy incident as cool and almost innocent.

This second observation I must also make so as to be quite fair in the psychological study of Parnell's mind. As will be seen presently, Parnell never really liked, and I rather think never really trusted, Gladstone. Parnell was not anti-English at bottom ; but he had the deep suspicion of Englishmen which was then common in Ireland, and it had been aggravated by the series of negligences and con-

tempt for Irish wrongs during the three-quarters of a century that had elapsed since the Act of Union. This suspicion had been enormously developed by such an historic transaction as the breach of the Treaty of Limerick, which, promising Ireland relief of her grievances, only resulted in the aggravation of all the inequalities which existed. Instead of the liberation of Irish Catholics from the hideous penal code, it was followed by an aggravation of these disabilities. That is why Limerick is still known as the "City of the Violated Treaty".

There always was, I think, this additional factor—the complete disability of Parnell ever to judge Gladstone with clear eyes. That distrust of him was exhibited in an earlier incident which I have already narrated, the incident of Parnell with his sister joining the crowd that threw stones at the house in Harley Street where Gladstone then resided. Gladstone, as I thought, and think still, was entitled to the affectionate and devoted support of every man with Liberal instincts, for he was trying to relieve the Christian citizens of Turkey from the abominable tyranny, with occasional butcheries, which had drawn Gladstone into his great campaign against Turkey, and against the policy of Lord Beaconsfield.

Parnell was a humane man by nature, and would have been expected to join in any campaign for the oppressed and butchered Christians, but he seemed on that occasion to have ignored all this claim of Gladstone to his own support, and to see in the liberator of the Christians nothing but a political and selfish schemer.

Committee-Room 15*: The First Day, November* 26, 1890

When on that dreadful night after the Party meeting, the Irish members heard Gladstone's letter read to them,

Parnell had left the House, but a requisition was drawn up, signed by thirty-one members, asking the Whips to call the Party together again on the following afternoon. The meeting-place again was Room No. 15, and Parnell, on taking the chair, would not accept the plea of some of his supporters that the meeting was not in order: he said that on a requisition so widely signed it was the duty of the Whips to call the meeting.

Mr. John Barry then began an appeal to Parnell, who, however, told him he could not be heard, as there was no motion before the meeting. Mr. Barry then moved: "That a full meeting of the Party be held on Friday to give Mr. Parnell an opportunity of reconsidering his position". Curiously, Mr. Barry had proposed, thirteen years before, the deposition of Isaac Butt for Parnell as President of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain; and this led afterwards to a bitter reference by Parnell to Barry as "the leader-killer".

Mr. Sexton appealed to Parnell, in view of the danger of Home Rule candidates being defeated at the General Election, to reconsider his position as Chairman of the Party, and to retire temporarily. He suggested that after Parnell's retirement the chairmanship should not be filled, but that the affairs of the Party should be managed by a committee of members to be nominated by Parnell himself, until they could safely recall him. Mr. M'Carthy and other members added their appeal. Parnell still said nothing. After an adjournment to enable certain members to bring in private Bills, there were speeches on the other side insisting that Parnell should not retire. Mr. Sexton thought that the views of every member of the Party should be obtained, and, as there were many members absent, the meeting adjourned till the following Monday.

In the meantime Parnell had issued his "Manifesto"

to the Irish People. It was written at 31 Eccleston Street, the house of Dr. Fitzgerald, one of his supporters, who gave this account of the day—

"The door was locked upon him while he wrote. He remained alone in the room. He did not commence to write the Manifesto until twelve o'clock in the day, and it was given to the Press twelve hours later. Mr. Parnell entered on his task in the coolest possible manner, without the least flurry. He came to luncheon and dined in the evening with Mr. Henry Campbell and myself, and conversed in his usual calm way about the nature of the statement he was preparing. In the evening I brought to the house Mr. John Redmond and Mr. William Redmond, Mr. Leamy, and Mr. O'Kelly; and, later on, Mr. Henry Campbell returned. I suggested that Mr. Justin M'Carthy ought to be made aware of the contents of the Manifesto before its issue to the Press. Mr. Parnell consented, and Mr. William Redmond went to the house of Mr. M'Carthy, who very kindly came. Some of the *Freeman* reporters were waiting in a lower room. The original manuscript, which was never parted with, and is now in my possession, was read to the *Freeman* reporter, who took it down in shorthand. He was called up, and read the Manifesto from his notes to the gathering, which at that time included Mr. M'Carthy. When the document had been read, Mr. M'Carthy said, 'I have seen Mr. Gladstone, and I may say he will contradict every word stated there about the Hawarden interview'. Mr. Parnell replied in the quietest possible manner, 'Let him produce the memorandum'."

The "Manifesto" was a very long document, purporting in the main to give a report of private *pourparlers* between Gladstone and Parnell at Hawarden a year before, with regard to the Home Rule Bill which the Liberals would introduce in the event of being returned to power. Briefly, it stated Gladstone's intention under Home Rule to reduce the Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament from

103 to 32; an unsatisfactory intention by him on land purchase; the reservation of control of the Irish Constabulary to the Imperial authority for an indefinite period; and the reservation of various judicial and magisterial appointments to the Imperial authority for twelve years. Parnell now declared that, while land purchase, police control, and judicial appointments were left outstanding under Imperial control, there should be no reduction of Irish representation in the Imperial Parliament.

There was also the matter of the evicted tenants, so many of whom had lost their lands owing to their obedience to the instructions of the Land League. Their fate was a burning question in Ireland at this time, and there was expectation that a Liberal Government would restore them. They were another factor that helped to embarrass the issue in Committee-Room No. 15; and in his "Manifesto" Parnell quoted Morley as saying to him with a gesture of despair that the Liberals, if returned to power, could not do anything for these evicted tenants by direct action. In its purely rhetorical passages the "Manifesto" crossed the Rubicon; such references as that to "English wolves now howling for my destruction" could not possibly help the situation, though it might rally old Fenians to his side. M'Carthy asked him to take it out, and Parnell answered promptly that, whatever went out, that phrase must remain.

The Second Day, December 1, 1890

On Monday, December 1, the Irish Party reassembled in Room No. 15, with Parnell in the chair. He called upon his secretary to read a great bundle of messages of confidence which had been received from Irish bodies or public men. It is doubtful if so astute a politician attached great importance to these resolutions from remote places,

but he must have enjoyed flaunting messages from the constituencies of members who were opposing his leadership. On Parnell's suggestion the reporters of the *Freeman's Journal* were admitted to take a report of the proceedings; the paper at this time had considerable influence in the National movement, and was supporting Parnell's leadership, though later it made a sudden *volte-face*. But so long as the proceedings of Room No. 15 lasted, Parnell exercised a veto over the reports, striking out passages that he deemed awkward for himself. The *Freeman* report was farmed out to the Press Association.

Mr. William Abraham, a Protestant member of the Party, then moved: "That, acting upon the imperative sense of duty to our country, we, the members of the Irish Party, do declare that Mr. Parnell's tenure of the chairmanship of this Party is hereby terminated". But Parnell was fighting with his back to the wall, and he ruled this motion out of order, until the motion by Mr. John Barry at the previous meeting, suggesting an adjournment "until Friday" to enable Mr. Parnell to reconsider his position, had been disposed of. It did not matter that Friday had meantime gone by; there was another Friday oncoming, and Parnell still ruled that this old motion would first have to be debated.

Mr. Barry strove to withdraw his motion; Parnell, who said he would conduct the proceedings strictly according to House of Commons rules, declared that Mr. Barry could not withdraw his motion without the unanimous consent of the meeting. To Mr. Barry's motion, then, Colonel Nolan proposed an amendment: "That the question touching the chairmanship of the Irish Parliamentary Party be postponed until members have had an opportunity of personally ascertaining the views of their constituents, and until the Party can meet in Dublin". Parnell hoped that if he

could have the meetings of the Party transferred to Ireland, his popularity with the people—and especially the Dublin mob, of whom he remained the idol to the end—before they had made up their minds irrevocably on the new issue, would win over the Party to his side.

It was in the debate on this amendment that the first of the many scenes between Mr. Healy and Parnell occurred. I have told what ill-feeling there had been between the two men for some years. In one of the letters read in the Divorce Court Mrs. O'Shea quoted Parnell as saying of Mr. Healy that it was ill fighting with a chimney-sweep, for, whether you were in the right or the wrong, you would get soiled.

Curiously, at a meeting held in the Leinster Hall, Dublin, three days after the decree *nisi*, Mr. Healy had made an impassioned defence of Parnell's leadership, ending up with a phrase that was to become a slogan of the Parnellites: "Don't speak to the man at the wheel!" That, however, was before Gladstone's letter. Now in Committee-Room 15 Mr. Healy boldly contested the truth of Parnell's account of the secret conversations at Hawarden. "You will have the difficulty of summing up to this jury, you being at the same time the judge and the defendant," said Mr. Healy. He accused Parnell of using "false words" at a meeting at Liverpool, whereupon Parnell sprang to his feet and cried, "I will not stand an accusation of falsehood from Timothy Healy, and I call upon him to withdraw his expressions". Mr. Healy said he would do so "out of respect for the authority of the chair", and, directly addressing Parnell, he continued, "I say to Mr. Parnell his power has gone. He derived that power from the people. We are the representatives of the people. Place an iron bar in a coil and electrolize that coil, and the iron bar becomes magnetic. The Party was that electric

action. There [pointing to Mr. Parnell] stood the iron bar. The electricity is gone, and the magnetism with it, when our support has passed away. I then say and declare that my vote shall be for the deposition of the chairman of this Party."

In his reply Parnell said: "Mr. Healy has been trained in this warfare. Who trained him? Who saw his genius first? Who telegraphed to him from America? Who gave him his first opportunity and chance? Who got him his seat in Parliament? That Mr. Healy should be here to-day to destroy me is due to myself." It was at the close of this speech that he made the emotional appeal to his Party not to leave him when they were in sight of the Promised Land. When Mr. Justin M'Carthy was pointing out the strangeness of Parnell's conduct in concealing the Hawarden conversations from all his colleagues, and spoke of the whole transaction as betraying "a vital error of judgment", Parnell interjected "Hear, hear".

In the course of the subsequent speeches during that long sitting there were many passages-at-arms between the more hotly tempered members on both sides, and at every stage the breach was becoming more irrevocable. Just at midnight the adjournment of the debate was moved, and Parnell declared that the "Ayes" had it. Mr. Healy pointed out that the chairman had not put it to the "Noes". When Mr. Parnell rose as if to move away, Mr. Healy moved that Mr. M'Carthy take the chair, which brought from Parnell the angry retort that he had not left it yet. Challenged by Mr. Healy to put the question, Parnell said angrily, "I am not going to have my ruling challenged by Mr. Timothy Healy".

Parnell was striving to avoid a division so soon. The vote would inevitably have followed the line of cleavage in the Party, whereas Parnell hoped by delay and the

wandering nature of the debate to detach some opponents from the majority before the parties had been stereotyped in a division. Thus, after all, he declared that the "Noes" had it, and his followers did not dare to challenge a division. Having thus insisted on their right, the majority soon afterwards consented to the adjournment.

The Third Day, December 2, 1890

The next day's debate opened at noon on Tuesday. Parnell again called upon his secretary to read a new batch of letters and resolutions in his favour. When the message which we had sent to our colleagues from America was being read, Parnell enquired what communications had been sent to us, and this led to more than an hour's wrangling. Parnell's secretary at one point referred to Mr. Barry, Mr. Chance, and others as "that infamous caucus in the corner", and when Mr. Barry demanded the protection of the chair, Parnell said to him, "The country will have to decide as to your proceedings. I shall confirm Mr. Campbell's words if necessary."

At length Mr. Healy demanded what was the question before the meeting. "A discussion", said Parnell, "has been opened by Mr. Barry on the question of communication with the delegates in America, and the discussion will have to proceed to its end." To this Mr. Healy retorted: "Another piece of pure obstruction"; whereupon Parnell said, "I think that is a most insolent and impertinent observation—a most insolent and impertinent observation". Mr. Healy appealed to his friends not to continue the discussion, and shortly afterwards the debate on Colonel Nolan's motion was resumed. So the wearisome business went on, lifted out of its monotony now and then by sharp-tempered recrimination. Old Fenians like James

O'Kelly and J. F. X. O'Brien found themselves on opposite sides, while one of the Parnellites had actually supported Butt and Shaw against Parnell in the far-away days when the movement began. Every supporter of Parnell in the room had his say, according to instructions, for Parnell believed that time and delay would be on his side. During one of the last speeches Parnell bent over to Mr. Sexton and said with pleasant humour, "I say, Sexton, are you fellows going to keep this thing up all night?" The joke was that the majority had been forced to listen for the greater part of two days to speeches from the minority.

The division was taken after midnight. Parnell knew he would lose on the vote, but still he betrayed no sign of excitement, but stood with a list of the Party in his hand. The room was lit by lamps and candles placed on the tables, and as Parnell put the amendment his pale face was in shadow.

He read the amendment in a low, unfaltering voice, and, looking up at his colleagues, said, "All who are in favour of it will say 'Aye' ". His friends shouted for all they were worth. But a moment later came the remorseless "Noes". The irrevocable moment had come, when unity and discipline were no longer to bind that Party like a band of brothers. "I think the 'Ayes' have it," said Parnell quietly, fighting for his hand to the last.

A vote being demanded, he did not longer resist, but called out the names alphabetically. The first two—Abraham and Barry—were against him; the next two—Blane and Byrne—were for him. But soon numbers began to tell against him, as eager partisans kept count. Some answered their names quietly, others with emphasis. When Parnell called out his own name and responded "Aye", there was a loud cheer from his supporters. At the end he totted up the numbers and said without emotion,

"I find that the Noes are 44 and the Ayes 29, so I declare that the Noes have it by a majority of 15". There was no demonstration, and the meeting, on Parnell's suggestion, adjourned until the next day. As he left the room, Parnell told some waiting journalists that he was "more than satisfied with the result". To his supporters he used to say, "We have only to get back eight men to have a majority".

The Fourth Day, December 3, 1890

The position now was that Colonel Nolan's amendment had been defeated, and that Mr. Barry's motion for adjournment, which was now embarrassing his own side, held the field. When the Party assembled on the next day (Wednesday), Mr. Clancy, one of Parnell's supporters, put forward an amendment: "That in view of the difference of opinion that has arisen between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell as to the accuracy of Mr. Parnell's recollection of the suggestions offered at Hawarden in reference to suggested changes in and departures from the Home Rule Bill of 1886 on the subject of the control of the Constabulary and the settlement of the land question, the Whips of the Party be instructed to obtain from Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, and Sir William Harcourt, for the information of the Party, before any further consideration of the question, what their views are with regard to these vital points".

Parnell was not in the room when Mr. Clancy concluded his speech, and Mr. Sexton asked would Parnell resign if the Party considered that the Liberal guarantees were satisfactory? Mr. Redmond said Parnell would in that contingency resign. Parnell was sent for. It seemed that there would be a way out after all. As Parnell entered the room Mr. Healy rose, and speaking with great emotion

said, "I wish to make a personal declaration in your regard, Mr. Parnell. I wish to say that if you feel able to meet the Party on these points my voice will be the first at the very earliest moment possible consistent with the liberties of my country to call you back to the leadership of the Irish race." Then Mr. Healy wept.

Mr. Sexton sought an assurance from Parnell that he would allow the Party as a whole to determine whether the Liberal leaders' reply was satisfactory, and, if they so decided, that he would then voluntarily retire from the leadership. Parnell asked for time to consider his reply, and the meeting was accordingly adjourned until the next day.

Immediately after the meeting Parnell wrote to Mrs. O'Shea:

"My Own Darling Wifie—I have received your letter through Phyllis [a maid], and hope to return to Brighton to-night per last train, and tell you all the news. Meanwhile, I may say that I am exceedingly well, having had twelve hours' sleep last night.

"The meeting adjourned to-day till to-morrow at 12 or 1 to consider an amendment moved by one of my side that Gladstone, Harcourt, and Morley's views should be obtained as to their action on certain points in my manifesto.—Your own King."

As often happened during the discussions in Room 15, Parnell, who seemed to be in a reasonable frame of mind at the adjournment, was full of stubborn pugnacity in the morning. This renewal of combat was ascribed, rightly or wrongly, to the influence of Mrs. O'Shea.

The Fifth Day, December 4, 1890

When the Party assembled at noon on Thursday, Parnell declared, in answer to Mr. Sexton's question of

the day before, that he "could not agree to surrender his responsibility or any part of his responsibility". He then read a resolution declaring that no Home Rule Bill which did not confer immediate control of the police and power to deal with the land question on the Irish Parliament would be regarded as satisfactory by the Party. He intimated his intention, if that resolution were adopted, of proposing a further one by which the Whips and five members from each side in the Party should meet and select from themselves a deputation of six to seek an interview with Gladstone, Harcourt, and Morley, "for the purpose of ascertaining whether their views are in accordance with the views of the Party on those points as above expressed, and whether they will agree to embody those views in their Home Rule Bill and make them vital to the measure".

It was in answering these proposals that Mr. Healy made a very vehement speech, during which he had many heated passages with the chairman. "We shall sit here," he said, "or a sufficient number of us shall sit here, and when you have your speeches delivered we will return and we will vote your deposition, be it to-day, or to-morrow, or Saturday, or Sunday—aye, the better the day the better the deed." He went on to read a speech which Parnell had delivered six months before.

MR. HEALY: On that occasion he said he "undertook to hold aloof from all English parties until an English party would concede to Ireland the just rights of the Irish people".

MR. PARNELL: Hear, hear.

MR. HEALY: Will he cheer what follows?

MR. PARNELL: Every word of it. Read it.

MR. HEALY: Every precious word. (*Reading*): "That time has since come". Where is the cheer for that?

MR. PARNELL: Hear, hear.

MR. HEALY: I have extracted it at last, rather feebly, I suggest. (*Reading*): "That time has since come about when an English party—a great English party, under the distinguished leadership of Mr. Gladstone—has conceded to Ireland those rights, and has enabled us to enter into an honourable alliance, honourable and hopeful for our country". With a "garrulous old man". [A previous gibe by Parnell.]

MR. PARNELL: That is interpolation.

MR. HEALY: (*Reading*) "Honourable for that great English party: an alliance which I venture to believe will last." What broke it off?

Mr. Parnell, Colonel Nolan, and Dr. Fitzgerald each replied: "Gladstone's letter."

MR. HEALY: It perished in the stench of the Divorce Court.

Having read further from Parnell's speech, Mr. Healy came to the sentence: "I am confident that Mr. Gladstone's genius will be equal to the task, that he will be powerful enough to reconcile and assuage the prejudices which still unhappily prevail to some extent."

MR. PARNELL: Hear, hear.

MR. HEALY: I wonder he never succeeded in assuaging Mr. Parnell's prejudice.

MR. PARNELL: He never has, and never will.

MR. HEALY: Then he never assuaged your prejudice, and you hoped he would assuage those of your countrymen.

MR. PARNELL: Hear, hear.

MR. HEALY: "Physician, heal thyself". You recommend the Gladstone prescription to the Irish nation, and you declare in advance that their prejudices may safely be allayed and they may safely accept the aid of Mr. Glad-

stone's genius; but he cannot allay your prejudices. I retain my hillside opinion of the whole transaction.

In his peroration Mr. Healy said: "Whatever be the insults hurled at me by any section of my countrymen, whatever taunts may be addressed to me in the course of this feud, I will endure them as we have endured ten years of slavery in this House, ten years of labour, ten years of self-suppression, ten years of sacrifice; yet we will go to our people and we will tell them what are the real issues in this matter, for though hitherto some of them have been covered up and enclosed, we shall not shirk, and I shall not shirk, stating them broadly and openly to the people—and with the people be the verdict. If you, sir, should go down, you are only one man gone. Heads of greater leaders have been stricken on the block before now for Ireland, and the Irish cause remained. The Irish people can put us down, but the Irish cause will remain always. For the future I have no fear. Instead of being distressed, I am confident and buoyant. Instead of wishing myself dead, as I have heard some men do, I am glad to be alive for Ireland. I am glad in this hour of her sorrowful destiny to be able to stand with her, and stand with her we shall, be the issue what it may."

Mr. John Redmond, who continued to support Parnell, was speaking, when an incident charged with dramatic irony occurred. Mr. Redmond described Parnell as the one man who was capable of saving the nation, and of discussing Home Rule on an equality with the leaders of the English parties. There was no other man, said Mr. Redmond. Mr. Healy here interjected: "Suppose Mr. Parnell died?" At which Parnell exclaimed, with emphasis, amid the cheers of his colleagues: "I don't intend to die." In ten months Parnell was dead.

Mr. Redmond concluded his speech with the ominous

words: "I assert my belief that the dethronement of Mr. Parnell will be the signal for kindling the fires of dissension in every land where the Irish race has found a home. Let no man accuse me of wishing to kindle those fires; but they will be lighted if this act is done, and in them will be burned to ashes the last hopes of the Irish people in this generation for the freedom of their country."

Mr. Sexton, who followed, pointed out that they had offered, if Parnell retired temporarily, to place the leadership in commission, and that Parnell could himself nominate the committee. He described the situation through which Ireland was passing as being like living on the crater of a live volcano. As a result of Mr. Sexton's appeal, Parnell gave an assurance that, if the majority of the Party decided by vote that the reply which was being sought from the Liberal leaders was satisfactory, he would resign the leadership, and he added: "You might have had that at the beginning of the meeting if you had not Mr. Healy's speech." "No, sir," Mr. Healy retorted, "if we had not your speech."

A committee was then formed, representative of both sides, to arrange the terms of negotiations with the Liberal leaders, and the meeting adjourned. The committee selected from their number Mr. Sexton, Mr. Healy, Mr. Redmond, and Mr. Leamy to seek an interview with Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Harcourt, and Mr. Morley. On the same evening replies were received by the Irish Whips from the three Liberal leaders. Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Morley pointed out that Mr. Gladstone alone, as leader of the Liberal Party, could speak in its name, and the point was emphasized by Gladstone himself, who in the course of his letter said:

"I would on no account attempt to fetter in any way your liberty of communication in any quarter to which you may think proper to address yourself. But I regret to

be unable to enter upon the point of consideration of any matter submitted to me in consideration with a selection of my friends and former colleagues which has been made neither by me nor by the Liberal Party of this country."

When these replies were received, Parnell and the sub-committee were summoned to the Smoke Room at eleven o'clock at night, and a second letter was despatched to Gladstone seeking an interview with him only. He replied the same night that he would receive the deputation.

The Sixth Day, December 5, 1890

At half-past twelve the next day (Friday) the four delegates drove up together in a four-wheeler, and were received by Gladstone. After hearing the deputation, he read his reply from a written memorandum. He pointed out in this that the delegates had been nominated by a sub-committee, which was appointed "to dispose of a question as to the purport of the interview at Hawarden". There was here, he declared, a "preliminary bar to any communication on the matters you desire to open. I acknowledge no such difference of recollection. I can say or do nothing which should imply that the general purport of that interview is matter of doubt."

The four delegates walked back together to the House, where the sub-committee reassembled, and Parnell drew up a substitute resolution as follows: "That the following members of the Party—namely, Mr. Leamy, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. T. Healy, and Mr. Sexton—are hereby authorized to request a conference with Mr. Gladstone for the purpose of representing the views of this Party, and of requesting an intimation of the intentions of himself and his colleagues with respect to certain details connected with the following subjects: First, the settlement of the

Irish land question; second, the control of the Irish constabulary force in the event of the establishment of an Irish Legislature." At a private meeting of the Party the same day this resolution was approved.

Mr. Gladstone, on receiving it, convened the members of the Cabinet of 1886, and by eleven o'clock at night Mr. Gladstone's reply was being considered at the Westminster Palace Hotel by Parnell and the four delegates who had sought an interview with Mr. Gladstone. With the concurrence of his colleagues, Gladstone declared that he could not discuss the provisions of a Home Rule Bill in connection with the leadership of the Party. "When the Irish Party", he wrote, "shall have disposed of this question, which belongs entirely to their own competence, in such a manner as will enable me to renew the former relations, it will be my desire to enter without prejudice into confidential communication such as has heretofore taken place, as occasion may serve, upon all amendment of particulars and suggestion of improvements in any plan for a measure of Home Rule."

In the closing passages of the document he declared that no change had taken place in his desire to press forward Home Rule at the first favourable opportunity, and that no scheme of Home Rule could be proposed "which had not the cordial concurrence and support of the Irish nation, through their representatives in Parliament".

When the delegates and Mr. Justin M'Carthy left Parnell, at two o'clock in the morning, their colleagues were anxiously awaiting them, and there was again a hope that Parnell would retire, as he had asked for the night to consider the matter. In the morning he was obstinate again, stating that his responsibility would not allow him to retire.

The Seventh Day, December 6, 1890

This was to be the last day of the Party meeting together in one body as Parnell had himself created it. It was Saturday, December 6, 1890. Before the Party met at noon, the majority had come together and determined that the issue would have to be decided that day. The session was to be prorogued for Christmas on the following Monday or Tuesday, and it was now a race between the will of the majority and Parnell's artful tactics to delay a decision until the Party would have to meet elsewhere. The consequent manœuvres on both sides explain why the attempted negotiations with Gladstone were conducted with such haste. The fact that the winter session had collapsed within a fortnight, owing to the break-up of Irish unity, was itself a sinister omen of the evils which the "split" would bear for Ireland.

The last meeting of the Party began in Committee-Room 15 at noon, and, as Saturday is not a Parliamentary day, they met by favour of the Serjeant-at-Arms, who had granted the use of the room until six o'clock. It was the twelfth day since the proceedings opened, and the sixth successive day of debate.

Parnell immediately began his astute tactics for delaying a direct motion for his deposition. Soon he had the meeting wrangling over the Gladstone negotiations. These, owing to the shrewdness of Gladstone, had not played into his hands, and the new discussion was in retrospective view, Parnell insisting that the sub-committee should bring in a report. When nearly three hours had been spent in discussion, Mr. Sexton delivered the ultimatum of the majority that the proceedings would have to be brought to a close that day; and that if a motion to determine the final question were not put from the chair, they would

have to "take such other measure as may be open to them".

After the majority had cheered this statement of policy, Parnell blandly suggested adjournment for lunch. During the interval, it was arranged by the majority that, when the party reassembled, Mr. Abraham should again bring forward the motion which he had tried to propose eleven days before. If Parnell refused to take it, the majority were to leave the room, after a protest against the chairman's conduct, and assemble downstairs in the Conference Room.

When the Party reassembled—the very last time they were all to meet together—the sub-committee's report was read by Mr. John Redmond. At its close Mr. Abraham and one of Parnell's supporters, Mr. John O'Connor, rose. Parnell called on his man. Members of the majority shouted for Abraham. For the first time in these long and trying debates the meeting seemed to lose control of itself. Apart from individual outbursts of temper inevitable to the circumstances, the members had conducted themselves with patience and self-command. But now pent-up feelings broke loose, and Mr. Abraham came close to Parnell and proceeded to shout his resolution, which could not, however, be heard in the uproar. Mr. Abraham handed his resolution to Mr. Justin M'Carthy, from whose hand Parnell snatched the paper, and seemed to be about to tear it up, but instead placed it in his pocket. "Give us back our document!" cried Mr. Healy. Mr. Arthur O'Connor, one of the majority, appealed to his colleagues to manifest to "the chairman, our late leader", every respect. Mr. Healy said that the chairman had called on Mr. John O'Connor, although Mr. Abraham had been the first to rise. "Healy, you will have to answer for this!" cried one of the Parnellites. "So will you, too!" retorted

Mr. Healy. The chairman again called on Mr. John O'Connor. "Abraham, Abraham!" cried Mr. Healy. "I am your chairman until you depose me," said Parnell, and Mr. Healy replied: "Allow me to depose you". Mr. M'Carthy complained that Parnell had struck the letter out of his hand. "You were about to put some resolution, thereby usurping my functions", said Parnell. Mr. Healy moved that Mr. Abraham be heard, but was ruled out of order by the chair.

These unpleasant scenes lasted half an hour. Then it was arranged that Mr. Abraham would be allowed to move his resolution after Mr. John O'Connor had spoken. Mr. O'Connor brought in a resolution expressing dissatisfaction that Gladstone had refused to give Home Rule guarantees unless Parnell were deposed. He went on to point the moral that while the Irish members were contesting Parnell's leadership, the Liberal leaders had placed themselves unreservedly under Gladstone, showing a united front. Sir William Harcourt, when invited to meet the sub-committee, had replied, "Treat with Mr. Gladstone". Here Mr. Arthur O'Connor interjected: "He is not a member of the Party". At this Mr. John Redmond said: "He is the master of the Party". Then Mr. Healy cried: "Who is to be mistress of the Party?"

At that terrible interjection passion froze. Parnell rose, with that blazing light in his eyes, and members thought he would strike Mr. Healy. Mr. Sexton felt the gravity of the remark so much that he confessed he hoped that Parnell would do so. Mr. Arthur O'Connor said: "I appeal to my friend the chairman". "Better appeal to your own friends"; said Parnell, "better appeal to that cowardly little scoundrel there, that in an assembly of Irishmen dares to insult a woman."

The moment came at length when Mr. Abraham

moved: "That we, the members of the Irish Parliamentary Party, declare that Mr. Parnell's tenure of the chairmanship of the Party is hereby terminated." When Parnell ruled that this was not an amendment to the motion proposed by Mr. John O'Connor, Mr. Healy cried: "Bravo, bravo!" "Mr. Healy," said Parnell, "I will not stand very much more from you."

The Split, December 6, 1890

There was further futile discussion: Parnell would not allow the Abraham amendment to be brought in—throughout the sittings he had wielded the powers of the chair most arbitrarily. At last the final moment had come, and Mr. Justin M'Carthy undertook the grave duty of declaring the breach. He performed his task in a few sentences with courage, but with a sort of sad gentleness which must have found an echo in most hearts in the shattered Party. "I therefore feel", he concluded, "that the longer we debate, the more we may possibly grow in passion, the more we may become unkindly, the more bitter things we may say. I see no further use carrying on a discussion which must be barren of all but reproach, ill-temper, controversy, and indignity, and I therefore suggest that all who think with me at this grave crisis should withdraw with me from this room." Forty-five members went out in silence, twenty-seven remaining behind. Parnell called out to one of the departing members for whom he had a particular liking, but the member would not come back. A minor drama of the departure was when Mr. M'Carthy's son, Mr. Justin Huntly M'Carthy, who had hitherto supported Parnell, declared that, as a member of a constitutional party, he would go with the majority.

Downstairs in the Conference Room the majority, with

one of the Party Whips in the chair, appended their signatures to the following resolution: "That, acting under an imperative sense of duty to our country, we, the undersigned, being an absolute majority of the whole number of the Irish Parliamentary Party, declare that Mr. Parnell's term of chairmanship of this Party is hereby terminated." Mr. Justin M'Carthy was elected chairman of the Party, with a committee of eight—including three of us who were at that time in America—"to exercise jointly with the chairman the powers and discharge the functions hitherto attached to the chairmanship of the Party". The meeting declared the Party's independence of other parties, and that no measure of Home Rule could be entertained that did not satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people.

The "split" had begun. Three days afterwards Parnell started for Ireland to begin the relentless fight which he was to wage in defence of his own leadership until ten months later, when death claimed him.

CHAPTER XIII

Parnell's night terrors—First meeting with Mrs. O'Shea—Hidden lover at Eltham—Signal to the Ladies' Gallery—A challenge from O'Shea—Ardent love letters—Death of their child—How Parnell read the Pigott forgery.

I OUGHT, I think, at this point to try and give some description of the life which, behind all these violent public scenes, Parnell was leading with Mrs. O'Shea. In that life the Parnell of the public was an entirely different man. It is a story indeed, especially with tragedy peeping in at all its scenes, of an idyll. Every passage of it, every letter in it, is a picture of an association that had in it all the elements that go to make a great true love story. When Parnell went down to the house at Eltham, Mrs. O'Shea was there to receive him, and she knew him well enough to give him the reception which most suited him. He came there jaded and hungry, after hours in the House.

Parnell as Sleep-walker

I may here make the remark that he never found the atmosphere of the House of Commons agreeable—though for some years nobody had to breathe it more constantly. He used to say to me sometimes, with a puzzled and worried look on his face, that the House of Commons, with its distracting noises and interruptions, always made it difficult for him to work. This impassive man had not the nerves of steel—except in moments of danger, or when he had to confront a situation that his strength of will alone could control—with which he was credited. There are many

scenes in Mrs. O'Shea's descriptions of him that suggest something approaching the neurotic.

He surprised Mrs. O'Shea by confiding to her that when he was at all run down in health he had, from his boyhood at school, a habit of sleep-walking.

"When he was in America", she writes, "he used to lock the door of his room and put the key into a box with a spring lock that he had bought for the purpose. He feared he might wander about the hotel in his sleep. Also he warned me, when he first came, that he was subject to 'night terrors', very much as a highly strung child is, and in these he would spring up panic-stricken out of deep sleep, and, without fully awaking, try to beat off the imaginary foe that pressed upon him. It was a species of nightmare; not, apparently, excited by any particular cause other than general want of tone. After a few years of careful dieting I succeeded in freeing him of these painful and most wearing attacks.

"When the attacks came on I went into his room and held him until he became fully conscious, for I feared that he would hurt himself. They were followed by a profuse perspiration and deep sleep of several hours. He was terribly worried about these nightmares, but I assured him that it was only indigestion in a peculiar form. 'You *really* think so?' he would reply; and when I told him that they would pass off with careful dieting he was reassured, and he followed my directions so implicitly as to diet that he soon proved me right."

There are throughout her book glimpses of silent wanderings in poetic scenes that reveal a side of Parnell that was not much known. Here, for instance, is a description of a midnight walk at Christmas time—

"There was snow that Christmas, very deep, at Eltham; and Parnell, who had joined me there, walked round the snowy paths of my aunt's place with me in the moonlight. Now and then he moved with me into the shadow of the trees as a few lads and men, with the inevitable cornet and

trombone of a village 'band', plunged through the drifts on their short cut to the old house. There they sang Christmas carols to their hearts' content, knowing they were earning their yearly bonus, to be presented with a polite message of her 'distaste' for carol-singing by 'Mrs. Ben's' (as she was affectionately called in the village) man-servant the next morning." [Mrs. Ben was Mrs. O'Shea's aunt.]

Listening to the Carols

"Parnell and I enjoyed that pacing up and down the wide terrace in the snowy moonlight. The snow had drifted up against the old urns and the long, low balustrade that divided the north and south lawns; and the great shadows of the beech trees looked unfamiliar and mysterious—pierced here and there, where the blanket covering of snow had dropped off, by the cold glitter of moonlight on the whiteness.

"Right away to the south lay the 'Chase', leading away to Chislehurst, wide, cold, and lonely in the moonlight, and I told Parnell that the cloud shadows that flitted over the glistening whiteness were the phantoms of the hunters of King John's time, who used to hunt over this ground, renewing their sport in the moonlight.

"Parnell loved to hear these little imaginations, and I loved to tell them to him for the sake of seeing the grave smile come, and of hearing the naïve 'Is that so?' of his appreciation.

"We walked up and down in the moonlight till the carols died away, and we heard the church clocks strike twelve. Then we stood together to listen to the Christmas bells sound clear and sharp from many villages on the frosty air, while Parnell again spoke to me of his belief that the soul after death resumed life in the planet under whose influence it was born. He spoke of his belief in a personal destiny and fate, against which it was useless for mortals to contend or fight, and how he believed that certain souls had to meet and become one, till in death the second planet life parted them until the sheer longing for one another brought them together again in after ages."

Their comings and goings in London were again like an idyll of two youngsters in love, though they were both getting to middle life at the time.

Parnell, according to the woman he made his wife, "was always unselfish and most considerate when I was ill", and she gives this as an example—

"Once when I was very weak after an illness of some duration he returned home to Eltham in broad daylight in a hansom cab, triumphantly supporting one end of a large couch, the other end of which spread its upholstered length over the roof. This invalid's chair he, with the help of my maids, arranged in my sitting-room, adjusting its complicated 'rests' with earnest abstraction, after which he led the procession up to my room and, in spite of my amused protests, carried me down and placed me on the couch amid cushions and shawls, and spent a happy evening in 'watching me' as I lay comfortably on my new possession."

I may add that this picture of Parnell as tender and solicitous was of course as different as possible from his general repute as a man of implacable frigidity of heart. I have already given an example of the care with which he went to the rescue of a drunken man whom we found lying on the road under his own cart as Parnell and his colleagues were driving from one town to another. The reader will also remember that I have told how his brother John said to me emphatically that the best nurse he had ever had was his brother. It is well to bring out this side of Parnell's character, as no man was so little understood by his contemporaries, and even by his colleagues.

Parnell first meets Mrs. O'Shea, 1880

I have already told the story of how Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell had their first meeting. Mrs. O'Shea in 1880 used to give dinners to her friends in Thomas's Hotel in Berkeley

Square (since turned into a series of flats), and among the people she used to invite was Justin M'Carthy; Justin told me how one day Parnell was expected, not having declined invitation. The time went on, everybody anticipating his coming at any moment, but he neither came nor sent an apology. His chair remained vacant, and Mrs. O'Shea, who was of a bright temper and very fond of a joke, sat in Parnell's vacant chair and, amid the laughter of her friends, said, "The uncrowned King of Ireland shall sit in that chair at the next dinner I give". In order to carry out this boast she drove down to the House of Commons with her sister, Mrs. Steele—it was a bright, sunny day, she recounts, little conscious of the blackness of night that she was bringing to Parnell and to herself—sent her card in to Parnell and asked him to come out and speak to her and her sister in Palace Yard.

"He came out," she writes, "a tall, gaunt figure, thin and deadly pale. He looked straight at me, smiling, and his curiously burning eyes looked into mine with a wondering intentness that threw into my brain the sudden thought—'This man is wonderful—and different'."

When she had gently reproached him for his neglect of her, and especially for not answering her letter, he explained that he had not opened his letters for days (I have already noted the fact that this was one of his extraordinary habits), but promised to come to dinner with her after his return from Paris, where he had to go for his sister's wedding.

But even at this first meeting there were indications that this was a case of real love at first sight; she leaned forward in the cab to say good-bye and "a rose I was wearing in my bodice fell out on to my skirt. He picked it up and, touching it lightly with his lips, placed it in his buttonhole. This rose I found long years afterwards done up in

an envelope, with my name and the date, among his most private papers, and when he died I laid it upon his heart."

The date was fixed for the dinner. Parnell arrived at it late and apologetic, "and", says Mrs. O'Shea, "was looking painfully ill and white, the only life-light in his face being given by the fathomless eyes of rich brown, varying to the brilliance of flame. The depth of expression and sudden fire of his eyes held me to the day of his death."

The party then went to a box at the Gaiety Theatre, and she and Parnell by some instinct fell into their places in the dark corner of the box.

"I had a feeling", says she, "of complete sympathy and companionship with him, as though I had always known this strange, unusual man with the thin face and pinched nostrils who sat by my side staring with that curious intent gaze at the stage, and telling me in a low monotone of his American tour and of his broken health. Then, turning more to me, he paused; and, as the light from the stage caught his eyes, they seemed like sudden flames. I leaned a little towards him, still with that odd feeling of his having always been there by my side; and his eyes smiled into mine as he broke off his theme and began to tell me of how he had met once more in America a lady to whom he had been practically engaged some few years before."

This was the story of the lady whom I have already mentioned, with whom he had once been very much in love, who jilted him, as he confided to John Barry, and drove him into politics.

Lovers in Closer Intimacy, Autumn, 1880

The dinner-party was followed by frequent meetings. He began to come to see her in the Ladies' Gallery, and on Wednesday sittings, which were then the short sittings

of the House (Friday has now taken that place), they used to have a drive together in a hansom. She raised the question of the re-election of her husband, but probably they were more concerned with each other. They used to sit in the meadows by the river through the summer afternoon "watching the gay traffic on the river, in talk, or in the silence of tried friendship, till the growing shadows warned us that it was time to drive back to London".

At what precise time this evidently growing love between them developed into intimacy is left unanswered, but it must have happened pretty soon. The two people were evidently drawn together by a natural affinity, and in soul, in heart, and in body they reached the unity of perfect love as much as any two human beings.

Parnell was soon writing to her, whenever he was sure she would receive his letters, in terms of almost wild endearment. A letter as early as December 28, 1880, begins "My dearest wife"; the next letter, on December 30, begins "My dearest love".

In the autumn of 1880, when these passionate letters were being written, Parnell began to live under the same roof with Mrs. O'Shea. It was in her house at Eltham. There she found him a patient to nurse as well as a lover to caress. It is only in reading her memoirs that one can realize how much of an invalid Parnell was throughout his brief life, and in spite of his robustness of figure and fine height. At this time he was in very bad health, complained of sore throat, and looked, "as I thought", she writes, "mournfully at my indoor garden, which I industriously watered every day. It then dawned upon me that he was accusing this of giving him sore throat, and I taxed him with it. He evidently feared to vex me, but admitted that he did think it was so, and 'wouldn't it do if they were not watered so often?' He was childishly touched when I at

once had them all removed, and he sank happily on to the sofa, saying plants were such damp things!"

But even this apparently did not restore his health. His throat became no better; he looked terribly ill. He used to sleep from sheer weakness upon a sofa before the fire. And here is another glimpse of that superstitious side of his nature on which I have more than once commented.

"Once", writes Mrs. O'Shea, "on awaking from one of these sleeps of exhaustion, he told me abruptly that he believed it was the green in the carpet that gave him a sore throat. There and then we cut a bit out, and sent it to London to be analysed, but without result. It was quite a harmless carpet."

Mrs. O'Shea nursed him, made him take nourishment at regular intervals, protected his sleeps during the day from being disturbed, and forced him into the fresh air for long drives. She was convinced that when he came to her he was at death's door.

Hidden Lover at Eltham

A further step to intimacy between them now came, and they had to resort to those painful subterfuges which are imposed on a married woman who has taken a lover. There was a report that Parnell was to be arrested. Undoubtedly he was ill and demanded rest, and that rest by the side of Mrs. O'Shea. "At length", she says, "we decided that a little room opening out of my own must be utilized for him, as I always kept it locked and never allowed a servant into it—except very occasionally to 'turn it out'. It was a little boudoir dressing-room, and had a sofa in it." Then she goes on—

"Mr. Parnell was then still feeling ill and run down, and enjoyed his fortnight's absolute rest in this room. None of the servants knew that he was there, and I took

all his food up at night, cooking little dainty dishes for him at the open fire, much to his pleasure and amusement. He spent the time very happily, resting, writing 'seditious' speeches for future use, and reading *Alice in Wonderland*. This book was a favourite of his, and I gave it to him with the solemnity that befitted his grave reading of it. I do not think he ever thought it in the least amusing, but he would read it earnestly from cover to cover, and, without a smile, remarked that it was a 'curious book'. In all this fortnight no one had the least idea that he was in the house, and the only comment I ever heard upon my prisoner's diet was that 'the mistress ate much more when she had her meals served in her sitting-room'."

Ultimately this life of secret seclusion must have come to an end. Parnell drove down nearly every night to Mrs. O'Shea's house at Eltham, adopting those stratagems to which I have already alluded for keeping his destination secret. When he came there he avoided the railway, and he used to go through the conservatory into Mrs. O'Shea's sitting-room. Here is the very domesticated scene which followed—

"I would have supper ready for him before the fire, with his smoking-jacket and slippers ready to put on. He seldom spoke after his first greeting. He would take off his frock-coat and boots, and, when I slipped on the others for him, he would eat his supper quite silently, thinking over the events of the night. I never worried him to talk. Supper finished, he would light a cigar, and sit down in his own arm-chair, saying, 'Well, Queenie, the Old Man spoke to-night', or So-and-so spoke, and then slowly tell me of all that had passed during the sitting, and his opinion of the present and future, so far as politics were concerned."

Mrs. O'Shea gives some extracts from the free conversation in which he indulged when he had recovered from the prostration of his work in the House of Commons. It was characteristic that he always spoke deprecatingly

of his own part in the proceedings. He would say: "I did not speak well to-night", and again: "I lost that quotation you gave me and brought it out sideways, and there it was all the time crushed up in my hand! Then I forgot the fellow's name and called him 'the poet'." Mrs. O'Shea assured him that Shakespeare could be called the poet, and he said, "Yes? Is that so? It seemed to worry some of the reporters; one came and asked me what I meant! You must make me learn it better next time."

Signals to the Ladies' Gallery

Mrs. O'Shea also gives some indication of that intense nervousness which lay behind the apparently calm and impassive face of Parnell. I used to remark myself that if you wanted to know the inner feelings of Parnell you had to look at his hands, which were clenched behind his back and which seemed to be tearing at each other. Mrs. O'Shea tells how the Orders of the Day (the agenda paper of the House of Commons) were crushed into a pulp, and that alone prevented his nails from piercing his hands. "Often", she says, "I have taken the 'Orders' out of his pocket, twisted into shreds, a fate that also overtook the slips of notes and the occasional quotations he had got me to look out for him."

She meantime became an habituée of the Ladies' Gallery. If sometimes she would arrive late and in the middle of his speech, he would always realize her presence, and by some slight gesture, such as a lift of his head and a lingering touch of the white rose in his coat, would say to her, as she interpreted, "I know, my Queen". Sometimes, when he wanted to see her before she went home, he would make a signal with his handkerchief, indicating that she was to meet him at Charing Cross.

Sometimes they would meet at Brighton. On one occasion he got into the train at Clapham Junction. She did not at first recognize him, for he had cut off his beard with his pocket scissors in the train, and had a white muffler around his throat and on the lower part of his face. He carried his disguises to farcical limits. Katherine Tynan tells of having seen him, muffled and furtive, like a man with a dreadful secret in his soul, shambling along the London streets.

In the midst of all this tranquil enjoyment of each other's society, Captain O'Shea came suddenly down, and without notice, to Eltham. He found a portmanteau of Parnell's there, made a scene, and sent the portmanteau to London. O'Shea issued a challenge to a duel. Parnell apparently was ready to accept the challenge, but it came to nothing. "From the date of this bitter quarrel", says Mrs. O'Shea, "Parnell and I were one without further scruple, without fear, and without remorse."

It is a striking and painful instance of the concealment that was imposed upon Mrs. O'Shea that when her husband came down to Eltham on the night of Parnell's arrest "he was so fiercely and openly joyful that my maids, who were ardent Parnellites, were much shocked, and I, being terribly overwrought, laughed at their disgusted faces as I went to dress for dinner. It was really the laugh of tears; but that laugh of jangled nerves and misery did me good service with Willie, and we got through dinner amicably enough, while he descanted upon the wickedness and folly of Parnell's policy and the way the Irish question should really be settled, and would be if it could be left in his hands and those who thought with him. He observed me closely as he criticized Parnell and his policy, and reiterated his pleasure in knowing he was 'laid by the heels'."

Parnell's Love-letters

While Parnell was in Kilmainham there came another complication into the love story between himself and Mrs. O'Shea. He wrote to her constantly by all kinds of methods, including the use of invisible ink. The letters are in the language of almost exaggerated affection which characterized all his communications with her. She is "my own dearest Queenie"—and so on; and his letters are signed "Your own King", "Your own loving King", "Your loving Husband", "Your own loving Husband", "Always your own loving Husband".

"I look at my beautiful Queen's face every night before I go to bed, and long for the time when I may be with you again; only for that, I should be happier here than anywhere else."

"I admire supremely my life of ease, laziness, absence of care and responsibility here. My only trouble is about your health and happiness, and this has been my only trouble from the first. Queenie then will see that she also must try not to be so unhappy, especially as her husband's love is becoming stronger and more intense every hour and every day."

"Has he [Captain O'Shea] left yet? It is frightful that you should be exposed to such daily torture"—a glimpse of the corroding anxiety, perhaps even jealousy, of the difficult situation.

Then Mrs. O'Shea announced to him that she was about to bear him a child. The news filled him with joy and with anxiety—joy at this new tie between them, anxiety as to her health, especially during the trying time that was before her—

"My own Wifie must try and strengthen herself, and get some sleep, for her husband's sake and for our child's

sake, who must be suffering much also." "Do, beautiful Wifie, take care of yourself and your King's child."

"I am rejoiced to learn", he says, "that Wifie hopes our child will be strong. I think it ought to have a good constitution." "My darling, you frighten me dreadfully when you tell me that I am 'surely killing' you and our child."

In the same letter—

"Rather than that my beautiful Wifie should run any risk, I will resign my seat, leave politics, and go away somewhere with my own Queenie as soon as she wishes; will she come?"

"Queenie", he says in another letter, "has been very good and very loving to her husband to give him this child, and to take such care of it during this long, sad interval; but she must remember that she is far more to me than all the world beside, and that she must specially take care of herself, as her King cannot now live without her."

"I fear", he writes in another letter, "my poor Queenie has had a dreadful time of it, and our poor little child also."

On the news of the birth of the child he writes—

"Oh, my Wifie, when I had your two short messages of the 14th your poor husband burst into tears and could not hold up his head or think of anything until my darling's note arrived that everything was right."

Parnell's Child born, February 1882

This child of sorrow and of doubt was born on February 16, 1882.

"I was very ill," says Mrs. O'Shea, "but the joy of possessing Parnell's child carried me through my trouble. She was a beautiful baby," she goes on, "apparently strong and healthy—for the first few weeks—and with the brown

eyes of her father. This child of tragedy rarely cried, but lay watching me with eyes thoughtful and searching beyond the possibility of her little life. I used to seek in hers for the fires always smouldering in the depths of her father's eyes, but could not get beyond that curious gravity and understanding in them, lightened only by the little smile she gave when I came near."

The child is sick, and Parnell at once gets apprehensive. He begs for a lock of the child's hair; and when he gets it he says:

"I am glad it is more like Queenie's than mine, although there is enough of mine in it to spoil it somewhat and render it less beautiful than Wifie's. Still, there is a splendid golden tint in it. . . . I hope my precious one is getting strong again and that she will have some good news to tell me of our little daughter when she writes next."

I go to the tragic *dénouement* of this episode. The unfortunate mother finds that this child of so much hope is slowly dying, and that the doctor can do nothing for her. The husband here reappears. He leaves his wife alone, has no suspicion of the truth—at least, so Mrs. O'Shea says—and only stipulates that the child shall be baptized at once.

"I made an altar of flowers in the drawing-room", says Mrs. O'Shea, "as the child was much too ill to be taken to church, and there the priest came and baptized Sophie Claude—Sophie after Parnell's sister, and Claude after Lord Truro, an old friend of mine."

A few days before the death of the baby, Mrs. O'Shea got the welcome news that Parnell might come to her for a few hours and perhaps see the child alive. Parnell had obtained a parole of a week from Kilmainham Gaol to attend the funeral of his nephew in Paris. "In the April morning", she says, "when the air was fragrant with the sweet freshness of the spring flowers, and the very breath

of life was in the wind, Parnell came to me and I put his dying child in his arms."

But the child did not die then.

When Parnell meantime had returned from Paris, he came to Eltham, having taken the precaution to telegraph Captain O'Shea that he was coming. "All that night of the 21st April", writes Mrs. O'Shea, "Parnell and Willie sat up in my drawing-room discussing the Irish question, and bit by bit working out the Kilmainham Treaty." They remained thus in consultation, and Parnell lay down for a few hours' rest before leaving for Kilmainham; "and my little one died as my lover stole in to kiss us both and say good-bye".

This infatuated lover, this equally infatuated woman, with the child lying dead by her side as Parnell took his way back to his prison in Dublin, with the jealous and vigilant husband in another room of the house to avoid: it is hard to imagine a more tragic scene.

The House in York Terrace, 1887

When in March 1887 rumours began to be spread about the common life of Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea at Eltham—naturally these rumours became more persistent after the Galway election and its suggestions—she found that Parnell looked so fatigued and worn, and had such a growing languor, that she determined he should be spared the long, cold night drive to Eltham.

She suggested his having a house near the House of Commons to which he could return and get immediate rest after a night's sitting. He had taken a house close to her at Brockley in the name of "Clement Preston"; but he never liked the house, and hated the way people used to comment upon and watch him going in and out; "Clement

Preston", as Mrs. O'Shea says, "apparently being but a poor protection in keeping off curiosity as to Parnell's habits". When she proposed a house in London, Parnell wearily said "he did not want to live in London unless I would live there too". This, she pointed out, was impossible, and she took a furnished house in York Terrace, Regent's Park, for him.

" Here", said Mrs. O'Shea, "I installed him with two servants, who absolutely worshipped the ground he walked upon, and, having placed various books about, books that he considered of pleasant relaxation, such as engineering and mining treatises, with a couple of Dickens' works that he had always been 'going to read', and a few technical journals, I went home haunted by his grave, considering eyes and his sad, 'You must not leave me here by myself; I don't want to be here without you!'—hoping that after a day or two he would settle down and feel the benefit of getting more quickly to bed."

Parnell always telegraphed "good-night" to her if he was away from her, and she became anxious about him until she had received this telegram. One night she was especially anxious; "but", she goes on, "after dinner I found myself mechanically making up the fire in my sitting-room as I did when sitting up for Parnell after a late sitting of the House."

"I felt amused", she goes on, "at my absent-mindedness, and sat down before the fire, thinking I would take advantage of the beautiful blaze I had made. I sat there idly thinking of Parnell, wondering what exactly he was doing at that moment, and presently, hearing the servants go to bed, and feeling disinclined for bed myself, I got a book.

"I could not settle to reading, and began to feel very lonely and to wish I were really waiting up for Parnell, as I used to. . . . I got up to shake off my thoughts, and,

throwing open the window, leant out and listened to the wind in the trees.

"I heard the clock strike two, and listened, as I had always done about this time, for the regular beat of the horse's hoofs that would bring my King home. I could hear nothing, and my longing for his presence was so great that I called out under my breath, 'I wish you would come. I do wish you would come'. Then I think I became drowsy, for I started up from the window, suddenly hearing three o'clock ring out from the village and the steady trot-trot of a horse in the distance.

"I held my breath to listen, my heart beating with an eager joy. I could hear the beat of the hoofs round the corner into the village as they came from the Common, then lost as they went up the High Street, and suddenly clearer with the jingle of the cab bells as they turned the top of the road and stopped. I knew now, and opened the door quickly as my love came up the little side-walk past the window, giving the familiar signal as he went up the two steps; and I was in his arms as he whispered 'Oh, my love, you must not leave me alone again'."

The Pigott Forgeries, March 7, 1887

And here is an intimate description of that historic morning when the papers published the forged Parnell letters. "They were cut out," says Mrs. O'Shea, "and pasted on the gate by a person or persons unknown." She goes on:

"On that day I did not give Parnell *The Times* opened as usual for his glance over the political reports while he breakfasted. He asked for it, but I wanted him to finish his breakfast first, and replied: '*The Times* is unusually stodgy; do eat your breakfast first'.

"He said he *must* finish a bit of assaying he had left overnight before going to London, and would not have time for papers afterwards, so I told him of the letters, and propped *The Times* against the teapot as usual.

"He read the whole thing, meditatively buttering and eating his toast the while.

"He made no remark at all till he had finished breakfast, and carefully clipped the end of his cigar; then, with a smile, he tossed the paper at me, saying, '*Now* for that assaying I didn't finish! Wouldn't you hide your head with shame if your King were so stupid as that, my Queen?'

"I helped him to set his chemicals right, urging on him that the thing was very serious, and that he must attend to it; but he only replied, 'You think about it for me while I am finishing this. Now don't spoil this for me. It will do presently,' and I subsided with *The Times* while he worked at his crucibles, and jotted down results—absolutely absorbed for more than two hours, and only brought back to politics by my call of 'You absolutely must start now'."

She goes on:

"Soon my absorbed study of the forged letters caught Parnell's interest, he shook off his apathy, and joined my study of his handwriting of many years and those of the various possible (and impossible) imitators. Once he became interested he threw himself into it as whole-heartedly as he did into any other hobby. We spent hours in this study of calligraphy, and made some interesting and amusing discoveries."

CHAPTER XIV

How I founded the *Star*—My first article—"Jack the Ripper" helps circulation—A visit from "Leather Apron"—My first day in London—A beautiful Juliet—Lord Wallscourt—G. B. S.'s leading articles—"Corno di Bassetto"—I leave the *Star*.

The Birth of the "Star"

HERE I must pause for a moment to describe an important interlude in my own life which had its influence on the Home Rule struggle. The cause of Home Rule was without any advocate in the evening press of London; I conceived the idea, half in hope, half in terror, that I might start a journal myself in favour of the views of myself and my friends. I went around rather shamefacedly among my friends to ask them for the capital, which I placed at £40,000. There was an interesting episode. Two of the richest members of the Liberal Party were brought together by me—they seemed to me to look at each other like two goats preparing for a fight; when one expressed his readiness to subscribe £10,000, the other answered immediately that he would contribute the same; £20,000—half my capital! My joy may be imagined. As a matter of fact, one of them entirely changed his mind and never subscribed a penny; the other, after long negotiation, agreed to subscribe £5000—half the amount he had originally promised. But I got the £40,000; and, much to my subsequent undoing, I got £2000, for the promise of a seat on the board, from a very cantankerous Scotsman, who afterwards contributed to my undoing.

I was as innocent as a babe at the time of all things

connected with finance or with companies; I didn't realise the importance of getting together a board that might be relied upon to deal in a friendly spirit with me. One member I insisted on putting on out of my warm personal affection and admiration for his great public spirit; he contributed even more than the other to my undoing. I did not realize that he had vast ambitions of his own, and that a great London paper could greatly help him in realizing these ambitions; nor how these ambitions could react on his attitude to me.

Then, as now, I was an extreme Radical, and I devoted my pen and the new paper which I had brought into being almost as much to the British Radical as to the Irish Cause. I wrote my first article in a white heat; it is, I believe, one of the best articles I have ever written. I will quote from it only a few sentences—which I may say have passed into history, and have been frequently reproduced; this is the passage—

"The charwoman that lives in St. Giles, the seamstress that is sweated in Whitechapel, the labourer that stands begging for work outside the dockyard gate in St. George's-in-the-East—these are the persons by whose condition we shall judge the policy of the different political parties, and as it relieves or injures or leaves unhelped their position, shall that policy by us be praised or condemned, helped or resisted."

In addition to my many other disqualifications, and though I had already been nearly a quarter of a century in journalism and had done all kinds of work, from the description of executions to the manufacture of articles on old prize fights, my experience in many respects was rather too narrow. I remember with what surprise I heard from Edmund Dwyer Grey, for many years proprietor and in control of the then great Irish paper, the *Freeman's*

Journal, that sport would be necessarily one of the most important features of the paper. The tip was useful. I was lucky enough to get hold of a gentleman who was then working on another paper, and who had immense reputation as a sporting tipster—he wrote under the *nom de guerre* of "Captain Coe". Though he is dead, the name still survives. In fact, I had become so absorbed in politics that politics alone made a direct appeal to me.

The First Staff of the "Star"

I made an excellent choice of an assistant editor in the late Mr. H. W. Massingham, who was then in the obscurity of a syndicate agency of small importance; and for the first time his brilliant pen got a real scope. He used to talk with rapture of a gentleman whose name neither I nor, indeed, anybody else had ever heard before; his name was George Bernard Shaw; he was appointed as one of the assistant leader-writers. Mr. A. B. Walkley and Mr. Clement Shorter were also unknown to me at the time. They were both then Civil Servants—Mr. Walkley in the Post Office, Mr. Shorter in Somerset House.

Another of my young recruits who has got to great journalistic distinction was Robert Donald, then a young Scotsman recently arrived in London. In the clerical department was the gentleman now known as Sir George Sutton, and one of the very rich members of the profession. I was recommended by Sir John Robinson, of the *Daily News*, to a young man named Ernest Parke, then working in the office of a City newspaper. It was almost the best choice in my staff.

Ernest Parke was then a young, flossy-haired man, with a keen face, a lithe and agile body, a tremendous flair for news, and capable of twenty-four hours' work, if

necessary, in a single day. He was, as he is, a singular mixture of shrewdness and ideals; an intense Radical, and at the same time a thoroughly practical journalist. He might be trusted to work up any sensational news of the day, and he helped, with "Jack the Ripper", to make gigantic circulations hitherto unparalleled in evening journalism.

One instance of his extraordinary shrewdness I must recall. In the search for "Jack the Ripper" there came into prominence a man of the East End who was universally known as "Leather Apron", and there were allusions to him in the *Star* which almost pointed to him as the assassin. The poor man was quite innocent, and we had given him an opportunity of an action with thumping damages. Parke parried this blow by inviting "Leather Apron" to come and see him at the office. "Leather Apron" made a demand for a hundred pounds for his assent to abandon all legal proceedings. Parke insisted on fifty pounds. When the man still dissented, Parke made the counter-proposition that he would tell "Leather Apron" where to get another fifty pounds which would make up the hundred pounds he claimed. "Leather Apron" assented; and Parke then revealed to him the fact that another paper had made insinuations against him as direct as those of the *Star*, and that he certainly could get fifty pounds from them. The bargain was made, and by this bit of information and by our gift of fifty pounds we were kept out of an action which might have cost us thousands of pounds.

Now, in old age, and in somewhat imperfect health, I look back on myself as I was at this period of my life as on an entirely different person. I was just about forty years of age; I had been a Member of Parliament for eight years. For the first six of these years whenever Parliament

was sitting my hours were from one o'clock, when I went down to lunch, usually with Parnell, till something like four o'clock in the morning; and again back at the House of Commons at one o'clock, and again usually up until four o'clock.

My Long Working Days, 1888

The Obstruction period was not yet over, though it was less intense in 1888; but it was a common if not a usual thing for me to be in the House of Commons till two or three o'clock in the morning. I had to have my leading article, which I usually wrote, ready by about nine in the morning, which meant that I had to rise after only a few hours' sleep; and within half an hour or so of my rising to be hammering away at my type-writer with one and often two articles for the paper, and to have them revised and ready by ten o'clock, at which hour our first edition appeared.

I may here reveal a little secret of the prison-house of journalism. In evening papers then, as I believe now, we had no first edition; the second was the title we gave to the first edition we published.

Conscious of the difficulties which these hours imposed upon me, I resolved, like the merchants of old London, to live in my place of business. I had a rather pretty flat fitted up at the top of the building, and there I slept. I did not realize at the time that fire would have consumed myself and all my belongings in a few minutes. We tested a sort of canvas chute by which people were then being taught how to escape from fire—I never ventured to try the chute myself; one person who did was rewarded by a broken ankle which took some days to heal.

I paid attention to every detail of the new paper. The figure which stands at the head of the paper even to this

day was first presented to me by the artist as a female. I thought that rather reflected on the virility of the paper, and I changed the female figure to the figure of the male warrior—which still exists. I resolved to add to the then usual features of papers a dash of personality; and so created the column which still is published with the title I devised—"Mainly About People". I would have nothing to do with the stodgy seriousness of previous journals, and in that way, perhaps, I may claim to have created a little of the modern personal tone which distinguishes the journals of to-day from those of yesterday. I always strove to make the headlines picturesque.

Some of my staff were even more daring than I. In the first London County Council Election, the Progressives (led by the *Star*) won a sweeping victory, and we announced the glad tidings under the heading "Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay"—after the music-hall song then the rage of London.

An even greater triumph was that of "Captain Coe". It will be recalled that one of the ways in which Richard Pigott was caught out by Sir Charles Russell in the tragic cross-examination was his mistake in spelling the word "hesitancy" with an "e" instead of an "a". The day Pigott disappeared "Captain Coe" suggested, and we accepted, the startling headline "The Man who Hesitetes is Lost".

Somewhat to my surprise, my City article was one of the most popular features of the paper. It was written by an able and somewhat cynical financial writer who knew all the dark passages in the life of the City—Mr. George Wedlake, whom I have already mentioned, and who had a genius for analysing prospectuses. This was not so important during the first year of the paper, but in the second there was a regular burst of company advertisements, and Wedlake was able to analyse severely and successfully

any such company, with the result that his comments were regarded as possibly disastrous to some of these new undertakings. Columns of advertising of these companies —the most high-priced form of advertisement—poured into the office and filled its coffers.

Lord Wallscourt of Galway

When I was a boy at Galway College, I used frequently to take a walk to a rather pleasant mound just on the Bay of Galway. It was known, and is known, as "Cromwell's Fort", and it was the spot where Cromwell had placed his cannon when he was besieging the town during his Irish war. Just across the bay one could see the dwelling of an Irish landed aristocrat called Ardfry Castle. I saw this Castle over the sunny waters of the sea in the colours of imagination and of youth; to me it was a dream castle in which a proud and prosperous member of the landed aristocracy enjoyed all the delights that wealth seems to offer when one is both young and poor. As a matter of fact, poor Lord Wallscourt, the owner of the Castle, was not rich. His title had come to him through an ancestor who had obtained notoriety as one of those who sold the old Irish Parliament for money and for title.

The only man I knew personally when I came to London first was an old Irishman named Tierney. He had been at the head of the revenue police in my native town of Athlone; he was also brought close to me by being one of the officers of the Catholic Young Men's Society, of which my father, a most devout Catholic, was another. Sergeant Tierney, as he was always called, was a perfect specimen of the Irish policeman and of the Tipperary man, for he came from Tipperary. He had a magnificent physique, with very broad shoulders, deep chest; everything was

sturdy about him, including his face, which was a mixture of strength and shrewdness and humour.

At this time Tierney was stage doorkeeper at the Lyceum Theatre. Two of the sons of his former chief in Athlone, Captain Maitland, had begun what came to be a startling epoch in the dramatic life of London. They were really the pioneers of what came to be known as the "leggy" drama, and they presented a number of what would now be called musical comedies with some of the most beautiful and also some of the most artistic women of London.

At that particular moment the season at the Lyceum had come to an end, and the company was acting at the Standard Theatre in Shoreditch. Some idea of my robustness at the time will be gathered from the fact that after I had traversed nearly all the West End of London, Hyde Park, Westminster, etc., I still had strength enough to go to the theatre at Shoreditch; and I spent my first evening in London at this theatre.

I may here repeat a remark which poor old Tierney made to me. We had been walking for hours, and my only food had been a cup of coffee, for which I paid a penny, and two pieces of unbuttered bread, for which I paid another penny, at a small coffee-house in Drury Lane. But I made no suggestion to him, even when it came to two or three o'clock in the day, that I was hungry; nor, indeed, did I feel hungry. "It's easily seen", said Tierney, "you are not an Englishman; you would be asking for food long ago."

My First Day in London

The Lyceum was closed, as I have said, but I was admitted behind the scenes, and met in its solitude and silence a few of the hands—all quaint, picturesque, inter-

esting creatures to me. I remember still seeing Marius, a great actor of that and many epochs afterwards, and for a while the husband of Florence St. John—I remember him sitting down at the piano and striking some notes, which sounded weird and sad in the solitude of the theatre. It was the time just after the Franco-German War had broken out, and the mournful notes seemed to me something like an elegy over bloody battlefields between the French and German troops.

There came to Tierney, among others, a curious figure in the newspaper life of the period, well known in his day, dead and forgotten decades of years ago. His name was Tom Purnell; he was a Welshman. He wrote brilliantly, especially poetry; and was indeed, I believe, the chief critic of that form of literature in the then omnipotent *Athenæum*. He was a queer figure, slight, restless, always in a hurry, and never doing any work he could avoid, and, I should say, living in squalid lodgings, never known to any of his friends, on squalid meals. He was a brilliant talker, and began to detail some experiences of the dramatic world of the day; and, among others, he began to discuss two of the favourites of the stage. I shall not mention their names, one was a woman of beauty as divine as her tremendous artistic gifts.

Among the many lost opportunities of my life I put my refusal to attend a supper which was given by this lady's husband after one of her performances in Dublin. It was "Romeo and Juliet"; I still thrill with the recollections of her incomparable performance of Juliet. But as a young journalist I was extremely disdainful; I resented the idea that chicken and champagne were to influence anything I wrote. I refused to go to the supper, and I never exchanged a word with one of the most beautiful and also most pathetic figures on the stage.

Her history as I heard it was tragically romantic. She was a daughter of a squire and a gipsy; came to London penniless, sat on a bench in Hyde Park, lonely and hungry; and I will suggest rather than frankly describe the result. Then came a descent into the abysses, including a temporary residence at the house of Kate Hamilton in Panton Street, which was then the resort of the young bloods of the period, and where Venus and Bacchus equally presided—Bacchus doubtless in the shape of beer and inferior champagne, Venus in a collection of the prettiest devotees of Aphrodite.

A Juliet from Kate Hamilton's

It marks a change in the spirit of the times that members of both Houses of Parliament, including Henry Labouchere, who was then one of the youngest and most assiduous men about town, used to frequent this notorious resort. London in those early days of mine was a very different place from the London of to-day. The public-houses were allowed to be open almost every hour of the day and night. I knew an old Irishman who had a public-house in Holborn, very much frequented by his countrymen. Two or three of them in delirium tremens, or on the border of it, used always to occupy some of his bedrooms. This public-house had its doors open during twenty-two hours of the twenty-four.

Then this poor girl had the good luck to attract the devoted, but I believe platonic, affections of a high officer in the Navy, rich, and a member of a historic family. Within a year of this acquaintance the girl was playing Juliet at the Haymarket Theatre, and in a night her name was made. She was all the rage at the period of my life in London to which I am referring.

The other lady of the company was simply a standard-

bearer in one of the scenes; but she had such exquisite beauty of figure that in the hour when she was about to appear the theatre filled, mainly to have the opportunity of gazing on her exquisite figure for a few moments.

Purnell began to ask the hands behind the scenes (who, of course, knew everything) about the actors and actresses, and in the midst of his conversation what name should come out but that romantic figure in my boyhood's days as I looked across Galway Bay. "Isn't Lord Wallscourt the lover of . . .?" mentioning the lady of the beautiful figure, for whom, I am sure, there was great competition among the bloods of the period. And then a second and to me crashing question, "Wasn't he the first lover of . . .?" mentioning the name of the great actress whose story I have just told.

One day while I was sitting in my editorial room in the *Star*, a card was sent in to me. I could scarcely believe my eyes, for it bore these words, "Lord Wallscourt, Ardfry Castle". I was at last to see the heroic and gallant figure which had haunted my dreams from my seventeenth year.

Naturally, I asked for the gentleman to be shown up; picture my astonishment when a tiny little man, sad, deprecatory, almost timid in his manner, stood before me. He was then engaged in a freakish scheme to make a combination between the oyster beds of Ardfry and those of Arcachon. I sent him with a letter of introduction to my finance editor. I don't think the scheme came to anything. I met him many years afterwards, tinier than ever; and he was on his second honeymoon, with a beautiful young woman, as he remarked to me with a smile of self-mockery.

One of the warnings of my friend Gray was that I should not look for immediate success with the *Star*. Circulation was a thing of slow growth, and if I managed to get to thirty thousand a day in the first month I ought to be

fully satisfied. It will then be understood how triumphant I felt when a hundred and forty thousand copies of the paper had to be printed. My article attracted great attention. It indicated that a new organ of advanced Radicalism had come into London, and for many a day afterwards the *Star* was the most powerful organ of London Radicalism.

G. B. S. as Assistant Leader-writer

The innovations which I had introduced also received approval. My staff added contributions of their own to these innovations. One clever young reporter invented the "*Star* Man"; and the "*Star* Man" passed into one of the journalistic personalities of the period.

But I soon had difficulties with my staff, and the greatest of these difficulties was, curiously enough, George Bernard Shaw. I did not know at the time that Mr. Shaw was a convinced Socialist, nor did I realize that the Socialists had a much keener dislike of a Liberal than of even a Die-hard Tory—as in many of the controversies of history, those nearest to each other hate each other the most.

Mr. Massingham had at that time also some Socialistic leanings. I wrote a letter to Sidney Webb, who was even then, I think, at the Board of Trade, asking him to remonstrate with Shaw, and I got, to me, the astounding reply from Mr. Webb that he also was a Socialist. A Socialist at that time was regarded with something of the same curiosity as a Communist to-day.

My difficulty was increased by the fact that I had so much to do with my long article and other things that I had to leave the revision of the leaders to others; and Mr. Massingham agreed too much with Mr. Shaw's point of view to be a severe critic of his writing. And thus the

extraordinary situation was created, that a paper started by Liberals, edited by a Liberal, and intended to advance the Home Rule cause, found in its pages sometimes extreme tirades upon Liberal leaders.

You may judge of my confusion when John Morley brought up to me in the Division Lobby of the House of Commons a paragraph, written by Shaw, I am sure, in which he was dealt with more faithfully than fairly. I had not, as a matter of fact, seen the paragraph. This placed me in a difficult position. I have never been able to dismiss a member of any staff of which I was the head, except on one occasion, and that was where my sub-editor had brought me into a very costly libel action; and libel actions —as newspaper men will know—are the most expensive of newspaper luxuries. The publicity they give to newspapers is more than balanced by the vast costliness of litigation. Mr. Shaw, besides, as I understood, had just emerged from that desolating interval in life in which employment either does not exist or is sparse and fitful; and I had gone through so much agony in the same interval of my life that I could not think of putting a man back into the abyss from which he had only just emerged.

And then Mr. Massingham came to me with an alternative. He gushed with his usual enthusiasm about the musical accomplishments of Mr. Shaw, which I believe were perfectly genuine. Mr. Shaw's mother was a music-teacher. I believe that somewhere in those autobiographical items which he gives to the delight, sometimes to the horror, of the world, he has said that he had once to earn his living as an accompanist. Anyhow, the paper at the time had no musical critic, and the proposal of Mr. Massingham was that Mr. Shaw should be taken from the leader-writers' room and made our musical critic. The change must have been very welcome to Mr. Shaw, for

his salary, which had been £2 : 10s. as a leader-writer, was now raised to £3 : 3s. He chose as his pseudonym at the end of his article, "Corno di Bassetto".

From Musical Criticism to "Arms and the Man"

There never was such musical criticism on land or flood. All the whimsicality which has since made Shaw famous and prosperous was then new to the world. I remember partially one passage which was characteristic of the style. Mr. Shaw was describing how the orchestra had given some beautiful passage in one of Beethoven's symphonies; but he interrupted himself to say that just as he was enjoying it the man with the piccolo gave a wild shriek with the instrument, glared at him, and he could listen to the symphony no more.

The articles attracted the editors of other journals. There soon came an offer to Mr. Shaw from the *World* to write musical criticism; and then from the *Saturday Review* to write dramatic criticism. Mr. Shaw, at last a dramatic critic, was able to get what probably he did not have before, a ready hearing from theatrical managers, and to put before them the probably large bundle of unread plays which he had all ready prepared. "Arms and the Man" was soon produced; and so on to fortune.

So the paper was going splendidly, its influence becoming daily greater. We appeared at a critical moment in the history of London, for the first County Council was about to be elected. I had little personally to do with it, but I may say that it was practically in the office of the *Star* that the first candidates were nominated. Mr. Firth, who was destined to be a chief figure in the new County Council, was with us almost daily, discussing the different candidates, and sometimes correcting some criticisms on

some of the men he was favouring. As is known, the Progressives, as they came to be called, had a tremendous victory at the polls and an overwhelming majority in the new County Council.

And just at this moment of omnipotence for my paper I began to have trouble—most of it, I now know, made by myself. For the first time I was in contact with a board of directors. I did not realize at the time anything about the laws which governed a concern under such control, and I really regarded it as purely nominal. Instead of consulting the directors as I should have done, and as I could have done, in most cases with perfect security of their accepting my views, I took action for myself. The first time on which I committed this stupid indiscretion was when, without consulting them, and in recognition of the splendid work he had done, I increased Mr. Massingham's salary by £100 a year. I gave to this member of my staff not merely unlimited confidence but also warm affection. But he was a bit worried at the time, as his first wife was about to have a child. I protected him so far as I could from any great demand upon his time. I was stupidly sensitive at the time, and any criticism upon me wounded me to the quick. When, for instance, I ordered a new machine, which was made necessary by the immense and unexpected success of the paper, I again did not consult my directors, and one of them rather sharply criticized my action. This same director, not with any ill-will but as a business man, also criticized the expenditure of £700 which the flat had cost, for I found it in the end impossible to get proper sleep amid the tumult in the heart of the City.

These things led to impatience on my part, and I was encouraged in that impatience by a member of my staff to whom I was foolish enough to listen. There came the first general meeting of the company. Everything was

going all right until in an evil moment I let myself go, and began to speak critically of the interference of my directors which had made me so impatient; the meeting was about to close with perfect harmony and unanimity when I threw this bombshell. My chairman, Mr. Priestly, was an excellent and good-natured man, but he was old and did not want anything that would jar on his nerves; and this meeting was followed by his retirement from the board.

Board Meetings as Bear Gardens

This was a change which was fatal to me. I was at the time probably very irritable from overwork. The dreadful hours of going to bed from the House of Commons and equally dreadful hours of getting up so early in the office, largely, as I have said, to watch over the indiscretions of Mr. Massingham and Mr. Shaw, had got on my nerves. Besides, I was personally rather unhappy at the time from causes entirely outside the office. I had, however, found a solution. The directors accepted this solution; which was that they should be bought out. This would have restored harmony to the company. Unfortunately one of the shareholders, whom I regarded as one of my most intimate friends, opposed this project; and perhaps it was as well that it was not carried through, for one of the new shareholders was the gentleman whom I knew at the time as Spencer, but who afterwards became better known as Jabez Balfour. But the efforts of the shareholder of whom I have spoken did not succeed, and the directors persisted in their readiness to be sold out.

And then came a blow which thoroughly paralyzed me. I have spoken of a man on the staff whom I regarded as my greatest and most faithful friend. He astounded me one day by sending out to the shareholders a printed in-

dictment of me, full of misrepresentation and deadly in its venom. Of course I should treat such a manifesto, if it happened to-day, with contempt; but in these days of more sensitive and less experienced nerves it gave me a stab in the heart. I felt I had Judases all around me. Our board meetings became bear gardens. I had only one friend on the board, the late Mr. Wilfrid Blunt; but he was futile. And to make a long story short, I accepted an offer of fifteen thousand pounds for the purchase of my interest. What I wanted was respite from this continual strain on my nerves, and of course fifteen thousand pounds was a tempting sum after less than two years' work to a man who had not a penny when he started the paper.

It was a blow from which I did not recover. The thought of the return that had been made to me for all the labour I had given and all the success I had brought to the paper, and at the hands of those I considered my friends, worked on me by night and by day. I had then—I have lost it all now—that spirit of vindictiveness which is one of the passions and weaknesses of my race. Night and day I thought of a return blow. I was bound not to start a paper in London for three years. I panted for that day when my freedom would be recovered; and I started a paper on that very day, called the *Sun*. I started it with insufficient capital; I found myself the Frankenstein of a monster which had so established itself from the original impulse I had given it that it could not be displaced.

I had three years of abject misery while conducting this paper, waking regularly every morning at two o'clock, and remaining awake till five or six discussing with myself the men who might help me to carry on, and affrighted by the spectacle of my doors being closed and my workpeople clamouring for wages I could not give them. I got rid of the struggle and the agony by selling the *Sun*.

But even to-day when I see the *Star* one of the most prosperous papers of London, and when I think I might have had something like twenty or twenty-five thousand a year out of it, the pain is renewed. Thus it is that some of our biggest things in life turn to bitterness and futility.

CHAPTER XV

Parnell's fiery cross—Wild anger of the split—The "Stop Thief" article—Parnell storms a newspaper—The Rotunda meeting—An eventful railway journey—Defeat at Kilkenny—Scurrilous attacks on Mrs. O'Shea—The Boulogne negotiations—Parnell's claim against O'Shea—Irish bishops' pronouncement—Parnell's marriage.

Parnell arrives in Ireland, December 10, 1890

THE battle on the Irish leadership was immediately transferred from Committee-Room 15 to Ireland. There are no months in the life of Parnell that are more dramatic, and, indeed, more tragic, than the months he occupied in making his campaign in Ireland. To the last he believed that the battle would end in his favour. If anybody denounces this as a sign of intellectual obtuseness, one can immediately reply that men of the Parnell stamp are possible and successful largely because they are quite unable to see obstacles. If Parnell had not had this reckless self-confidence he could never have embarked on the tremendous and apparently impossible task of breaking down the House of Commons and subjecting it to his will and to the demands of the people he represented! But he did accomplish all those things.

I remember very well the last time that Parnell and his colleagues met at a banquet, and there was that cordiality of men who had fought strenuously but with enormous success for years together, and in loyal comradeship for the most part one with the other. There was also, of course, the enthusiastic admiration for the great chief to whom we owed mainly the creation of our Party and largely the

success of it. I still remember the sigh with which Justin M'Carthy said to me after the split had come that we should never meet at the round table again. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the struggle, we all perhaps filled ourselves with the hope, first, that the struggle would be brief, but, secondly, that, even if it were prolonged, it would be conducted with some recollections of the years of our loyal companionship.

We little realized at the beginning two fundamental facts of political life: first, that men who had been friends but yesterday may in the stress of a faction fight become the bitterest of enemies; and secondly, that it is not in Irish nature to conduct a fight with self-restraint, and, above all, with restraint of language. In addition, the speeches made at Leinster Hall and the extraordinary hold we all knew Parnell had over the Irish mind may have deceived us into the belief either that he would be more rational and more candid, or that at least these years of almost idolatrous love would protect him from violent vituperation.

The "National Press"

I still remember that shock, to which I have already alluded, in which we got the first proof of the separation of the majority of the Party from Parnell, in the use of the phrase, "The Parnellites", with the hostile meaning—that title being one of which we had been proud for many years. We were soon undeceived. As the struggle developed the bitterness of language increased, and it was evident that in some at least of the protagonists on both sides there was almost a murderous violence of feeling.

It remained the consistent policy of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien that the struggle should be carried on without any such brutality of feeling or of language; but the proposal

did more credit to their feeling than to their prescience. To other additions to the fuel of passion there came the creation of the *National Press*. The creation of this organ of the anti-Parnellites was made necessary by the fact that the *Freeman's Journal* (then the only daily organ of Nationalist opinion) had gone over body and soul to Parnell. It was under the control by that time of Mrs. Dwyer Gray—the widow of the late proprietor—and of her son, a boy in years but brilliant in ability, who, owing to the internal struggles in Ireland, fled the scene and went to live in the Antipodes.

Shares in the *National Press* were taken up eagerly, and a considerable capital of something like forty thousand pounds was at once subscribed. It was conducted with brilliant ability, though in a ruthless spirit. One article in particular attracted immediate attention; it was known then, it is remembered still, as the "Stop Thief!" article. I give some extracts from this article by way of showing the spirit in which it was written:

"STOP THIEF!

"On his native heath at Wicklow yesterday, Mr. Parnell shirked in the most cowardly and hang-dog fashion the terrible indictment of Archbishop Croke. . . . We give elsewhere the alleged 'reply'. As to the damning discourtesy with which the burrowing adulterer treated the Metropolitan of Munster, no answer is attempted. . . .

"The silence of Mr. Parnell now is the best explanation of Mr. Parnell's refusal to face even in five minutes' friendly conversation a powerful and determined Nationalist. Why? Because for years *he has been stealing the money entrusted to his charge*. . . . As to Mr. Murrough's thousand pounds. . . . Mr. Murrough, at Mr. Parnell's special request, made his cheque payable on the Old Broad Street branch of the National Bank, *where the Irish Party have no*

account. It was cashed there by Mr. Parnell, who never informed any of his colleagues of its receipt, who caused no entry of the subscription to be made in the Party ledger. . . . *This money Mr. Parnell passed into his private account, and put into his own pocket.* There is no trace of it anywhere.

. . . . . .

"A wily thief is Mr. Fox [one of Parnell's pseudonyms in the intrigue with Mrs. O'Shea]. . . . This charge, if he fails to face it, has come to stay. It will haunt Mr. Parnell on platform, in Parliament, at bed and board, for the remainder of his career. We will force him to face it, or, amidst the contempt of his own supporters, 'lash the rascal naked through the world'.

. . . . . .

"If Mr. Parnell debauched Mrs. O'Shea, one of the Commandments delivered to us by Moses called that 'adultery'. If he appropriated the moneys left in trust with him—and we are prepared to prove he did—the same old-fashioned law-giver called that 'theft'. . . . We say, and intend to continue saying, that he stole some of this money."

I do not go into the question whether articles of that kind were justifiable. It is sufficient for the moment to say that such articles, and this one in particular, had the effect of cruelly exasperating feeling; and probably in some cases it added many recruits to the ranks of the Parnellites, driven to fury by this tremendous onslaught on their adored chief. As to the charges implied in the article, I do not think they could have been substantiated. Parnell, in money matters, was a curious mixture. He was, as I have already said, very near on the one hand, and on the other slatternly to the last degree; and, as a matter of fact, he died practically bankrupt, and even his ancestral home in Avondale had to be sold. Whoever made any money out of politics, poor Parnell did not.

The "Fire-escape"

There was one incident in connection with the divorce proceedings which I must mention. It is part of the irony of life that great events should depend on trifles, and these trifles either inventions or the exaggeration of simple incidents. One of the persons examined was a maidservant, who, when Captain O'Shea turned up at the house in Medina Terrace, said to him that Mr. Parnell was upstairs with Mrs. O'Shea. O'Shea went upstairs, and, coming down again immediately, said that Parnell must be there still unless he had got out by a fire-escape.

This incident caught the imagination of the public, and especially of the enemies of Parnell, and Parnell appeared in several caricatures climbing down a fire-escape; these pictures of Parnell in so ridiculous a position helped to add to the storm of ridicule in which he was involved at this unfortunate moment.

Some time afterwards Captain O'Shea was taking a meal with the very hospitable Beerbohm Tree; Beerbohm Tree, who was an intimate friend of mine, repeated to me a portion of their conversation—which was to this effect: Beerbohm Tree said it was a mistake to say that ridicule did not kill in England as well as in France, and that, as a matter of fact, there was nothing in the story of Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell that had done Parnell so much injury as the story of the fire-escape. Captain O'Shea, after listening in silence, replied, "And the best of it was, there was no fire-escape!"

Gerard O'Shea, the son of Captain O'Shea, and himself one of the victims of the tragedy,—for the litigation about his mother's heritage left him a very small instead of a large fortune—told me that he mentioned the fire-escape in conversations with Sir William Capel Slaughter, who was

Captain O'Shea's solicitor. When the solicitor pressed him as to how Parnell left the room in Medina Terrace, Gerard O'Shea replied, "I'm d——d if I know, unless he nipped down the fire-escape". He added that there were fire-escapes to each room in that house, but that it would have been impossible for Parnell to have got out in that way in time, and in broad daylight, as he would have been visible all along the front. "I am sure", said Gerard O'Shea, "that he slipped downstairs and out through the basement on to the beach." He told me: "I only said about the fire-escape as a joke, never thinking the solicitor would take it seriously".

Anyhow, as will be seen, the so-called disappearance by the fire-escape became one of the most prominent factors in the story, and perhaps the one that helped to destroy Parnell. Thus is history made.

Parnell's Furious Energy

During this last campaign the one thing that stands out is the utterly reckless disregard which Parnell showed for his health, and the mad energy which he displayed. Anybody who knew his physical condition at the time could have told him that he was killing himself, and not slowly, but rapidly. One of the remarkable things about this campaign—it is one of the abounding evidences, some of which I have already given, of his absolute subjection to the lady who had by this time become his wife—one of the remarkable things, I say, is that, though the proper and reasonable course for him to have adopted would have been to settle down in Ireland so as to be able to get to the many meetings he had to address without unnecessary fatigue, he regularly, practically without an exception, rushed from the house he occupied with Mrs. Parnell in

Brighton to the Sunday meetings in Ireland—the meeting he had usually to reach by a long and fatiguing journey—and back to Brighton from the meeting. This he did every week-end, even when his health was gone and he began to foreshadow his own death.

It was also an additional strain then, as it is to a large extent to-day, that all the Irish meetings took place in the open air. It is a country with scarcely any large halls outside those in a few of the towns. The meetings were almost always held immediately after the last Mass, when the people were gathered together from their different villages. The weather in Ireland is notoriously uncertain, and meetings had accordingly often to take place amid a downpour of rain or with a bitter wind. But steadily, week after week, Parnell crossed from Brighton to Ireland, back from Ireland to Brighton, by the quickest connections he could find. His followers, who had groaned for years under his growing absences from the House of Commons, who remembered that for years he had not put his foot on Irish soil except for some days' shooting in a small lodge he had in his own county, could not help contrasting these feverish and, indeed, insane activities of Parnell when he was fighting for his own hand, with his bland indolence when he had to fight for his Party and for his people.

One of the things I discussed in one of the last interviews I had with Mr. John Dillon was the state of Parnell's mind during these terrible months. Mr. Dillon's judgment was equable and tolerant on all questions of individuals, though he had his strong personal animosities to men whom he regarded as untrue to the cause. His judgment was that Parnell's inheritance of insanity had at last fallen upon him, and that Parnell must be regarded as having been more or less insane during the last months of his life.

Parnell arrives in Dublin, December 10, 1890

One of the things that struck me most at the time was a scene that took place in Dublin. *United Ireland*, which, as has been seen, had been founded by Mr. William O'Brien, and had carried on a brilliant and famous campaign for several years, changed over with the change in the Irish Party, and became an organ of the anti-Parnellites. Parnell had good reason in the first days of the Irish campaign for his confidence in the ultimate result of the conflict, in spite of the decision of the party against him. Before he started for Dublin he said to the representative of the *Freeman's Journal* who asked him for a message for the Irish people: "Tell them that I will fight to the end."

He left for Ireland on the night of Tuesday, Dec. 9, and immediately on arrival he went to the house of one of the most faithful of his friends—the late Dr. Kenny. He found there a hearty welcome. I give a description from Mr. Barry O'Brien's book of the scene in the breakfast-room:

"The room was full of men, all talking together, interrupting each other, making suggestions and counter-suggestions, proposing plans and counter-plans, and everyone too full of his own views to listen to the views of anyone else. Parnell sat silently near the fire, looking thoughtfully into it and apparently heeding nothing that was going on. Mrs. Kenny entered the room, made her way through the crowd to Parnell, and said, 'Mr. Parnell, do you not want something to eat?'

" 'That is just what I do want,' he said, with a smile.

" 'Why,' said Mrs. Kenny, going among the agitators, 'don't you see that the man is worn out and wants something to eat, while you all keep talking and debating and making a noise?'

"Soon there was complete silence, and Parnell sat to the table, saying, 'I am as hungry as a hawk.' "

In the evening he spoke, amid scenes of passionate enthusiasm, in the Dublin Rotunda; and on the following morning, showing more and more the dictatorial and reckless spirit, he ordered the seizure of *United Ireland*. Here is a description of this scene—I think it worth while to give it fully; it shows Parnell to be what, at bottom, he really was—namely, a man of desperate and reckless resolution, who, if he had lived in the days of the French Revolution, might well have been one of the leaders of the Terror; like them, have sent to the guillotine the men he considered dangerous opponents of himself and of his policy. It showed once more—if a demonstration of the fact were necessary—that behind the cold and impassive exterior of Parnell there was a volcanic energy and also a ruthless determination.

The Seizure of "United Ireland", December 11, 1890

In one of his speeches he declared that if he had had the power he would have sent his opponents to a court-martial and executed them; and undoubtedly he meant what he said. This may have been partially the insanity which he inherited through so many ancestors, and which the blazing, red-flint eyes in moments of excitement always partially revealed to those who watched him closely. If Parnell is studied in this dreadful scene, one will see that these conclusions in regard to his real temperament were well founded:

" 'I was walking', says an eye-witness, 'down the north side of O'Connell Street, when there was a rush from all quarters in the direction of Lower Abbey Street. I followed the crowd, which stopped opposite the office of *United*

Ireland. There I witnessed a scene of wild excitement. Sticks and revolvers were being circulated freely by men who passed in and out of the dense mass, but as yet no blows had been exchanged.

"'The enemy was, in fact, safe behind barred doors and windows, out of harm's way for the present, in the office of *United Ireland*. Suddenly round the corner dashed a pony carriage containing two gentlemen, as well as I can remember, unattended; one I was told was Dr. Kenny, the other I knew to be Charles Stewart Parnell. . . . The carriage dashed on, the people making way for it. Both men seemed heedless of the crowd, thinking sternly of the seizure of the offices which they had come to make. A tremendous sensation was produced by the appearance of Parnell. They had been, doubtless, on the point of storming the citadel of the mutineers, and here was their captain come to fight in their front. Cheer after cheer filled the air, mingled with cries of hatred, defiance, and exultation. The carriage was checked so abruptly that the horse fell flat upon the road. Parnell sprang out, rushed up the steps, and knocked peremptorily at the office door. There was a pause, during which every eye regarded him and him alone. Suddenly he turned, his face pale with passion, his dark eyes flaming: he realized that obedience was not to be expected from those within, realized also the pain of being taunted and jeered at by his own countrymen, for there were indications of this from those within. He turned and spoke to some of his followers, then stood to wait. We knew by instinct that he was not going to turn away from that door, at which he had demanded admittance; he intended to storm the stronghold of the mutineers.

"'I forgot everything save that there was going to be a historic fight, and that I wanted to have a good view of it. I dashed into a house opposite, and ran upstairs. The windows of the first floor were crowded. I ran higher up, and soon gained a splendid point of vantage. I was in full sight of the beleaguered offices, and had a bird's-eye view of the crowd in the street—a crowd of grim, determined, passionate men, many of them armed, and all ready and eager for a fray. Parnell's envoys were back by this time,

bringing from some place near a crowbar and pickaxe. There was a brief discussion. Then Parnell suddenly realized that the fort might be carried from the area door. In a moment he was on the point of vaulting the railings. The hands of considerate friends restrained him by force. I heard his voice ring out clearly, impatiently, imperatively: "Go yourselves if you will not let me!" At the word several of those around him dropped into the area. Now Parnell snatched the crowbar, and, swinging his arms with might and main, thundered at the door. The door yielded, and, followed by those nearest to him, he disappeared into the hall. Instantly uprose a terrible noise. The other storming party, it seems, had entered from the area, and, rushing upstairs, had crashed into Parnell's bodyguard. What happened within the house I do not know, for spectators outside could only hold their breath and listen and guess. Feet clattered on the boarded stairs, voices hoarse with rage shrieked and shouted. A veritable pandemonium was let loose. At last there was a lull within, broken by the cheers of the waiting crowd without. One of the windows on the second storey was removed, and Parnell suddenly appeared in the aperture. He had conquered. The enthusiasm which greeted him cannot be described. His face was ghastly pale, save only that on either cheek a hectic crimson spot was glowing. His hat was off now, his hair dishevelled, the dust of the conflict begrimed his well-brushed coat. The people were spell-bound, almost terrified, as they gazed on him. . . . Then he spoke, and the tone of his voice was even more terrible than his look. He was brief, rapid, decisive, and the closing words of his speech still ring in my ear: "I rely on Dublin. Dublin is true. What Dublin says to-day Ireland will say to-morrow."

" 'He had simply recaptured *United Ireland* on his way going south to Cork. The work done, he immediately entered the carriage and drove to Kingsbridge terminus. After what I had witnessed, I could not go tamely about my business. Hailing a car, I dashed down the quays. Many other cars went in the same direction, and the faithful crowd followed afoot. I was among the first to reach

the terminus. I pushed towards the platform, but was stopped by the ticket-collector. I was determined, however, not to be baulked, and I was engaged in a hot altercation with him when I felt myself being crushed and wedged forward. With or without leave, I was being swept on to the platform, and, turning to see who was pushing or being pushed against me in the gangway, I found, to my amazement, that the foremost in the throng was Parnell himself. . . . The crowd at the station was now immense, and the spirit of "I don't care what I do" which led me up to the room in Lower Abbey Street seemed to inspire everybody. People rushed about madly on the platform, seeking for every point of vantage to look at the Chief. . . . Parnell had entered a saloon carriage; the crowd cheered again and again, calling his name. He stood at the carriage window looking weary, pale, wistful, and bowed graciously to the enthusiastic crowd. Many of those present endorsed the words of a young lady who exclaimed, addressing an elderly aristocrat wrapped in furs: "Oh, father, hasn't he a lovely face!" The face disappeared from the window. The cheers again rose up, and then died away as the train passed from our sight.'"

Mr. O'Brien had cabled from America to Mr. Donnelly, the manager of *United Ireland*:

"If the Party decides in favour of Parnell, hand over the establishment to any authorized agent of Parnell. If the Party decides against Parnell, support our views moderately but strenuously, avoiding all unkind language regarding Parnell personally. Permit nobody to interfere."

O'Brien cabled twice to Bodkin, who was in editorial charge, enjoining him to see that nothing personally offensive to Parnell should appear, and forbidding him to use the cartoon of the paper to illustrate any incident of the controversy, and that he should print nothing on the subject but what he should write himself. O'Brien would probably have used the paper as a pacific medium.

The Rotunda Meeting, December 10, 1890

The meeting at the Rotunda certainly had encouraged Parnell in the opinion that the people of Ireland were on his side. Of course, I can give no personal account of it, because I was in America at this time and for some months afterwards. But there was present at it a very brilliant woman of letters, who from first to last was a very strong adherent of Parnell—the well-known Irish writer, Katharine Tynan. Her account is the best I have seen, and very graphic:

"It was nearly 8.30 when we heard the bands coming, then the windows were lit up by the lurid glare of thousands of torches in the street outside. There was a distant roaring like the sea. The great gathering within waited silently with expectation. Then the cheering began, and we craned our necks and looked on eagerly, and there was the tall, slender, distinguished figure of the Irish leader making its way across the platform. I don't think any words could do justice to his reception. The house rose at him; everywhere around there was a sea of passionate faces, loving, admiring, almost worshipping that silent, pale man. The cheering broke out again and again: there was no quelling it. Mr. Parnell bowed from side to side, sweeping the assemblage with his eagle glance. The people were fairly mad with excitement. I don't think anyone outside Ireland can understand what a charm Mr. Parnell has for the Irish heart; that wonderful personality of his, his proud bearing, his handsome, strong face, the distinction of look which marks him more than anyone I have ever seen. All these are irresistible to the artistic Irish.

"I said to Dr. Kenny, who was standing by me, 'He is the only quiet man here.' 'Outwardly,' said the keen medical man emphatically. Looking again, one saw the dilated nostrils, the flashing eye, the passionate face; the leader was simply drinking in thirstily this immense love,

which must have been more heartening than one can say after that bitter time in the English capital. Mr. Parnell looked frail enough in body—perhaps the black frock-coat, buttoned so tightly across his chest, gave him that look of attenuation; but he also looked full of indomitable spirit and fire.

"For a time silence was not obtainable. Then Father Walter Hurley climbed on the table and stood with his arms extended. It was curious how the attitude silenced a crowd which could hear no words.

"When Mr. Parnell came to speak, the passion within him found vent. It was a wonderful speech; not one word of it for oratorical effect, but every word charged with a pregnant message to the people who were listening to him, and the millions who should read him. It was a long speech, lasting nearly an hour, but listened to with intense interest, punctuated by fierce cries against men whom this crisis has made odious, now and then marked in a pause by a deep-drawn moan of delight. It was a great speech—simple, direct, suave—with no device and no artificiality. Mr. Parnell said long ago, in a furious moment in the House of Commons, that he cared nothing for the opinion of the English people. One remembered it now, noting his passionate assurances to his own people, who loved him too well to ask him questions."

Dublin was fiercely and almost unanimously on the side of Parnell, and, in the state of mind which has been indicated by that terrible scene I have just quoted, it will be seen that he was himself in the same mood as his impassioned followers. This steadfastness of Dublin to Parnell remained for a long time afterwards. I got a painful proof of this fact when, some years after Parnell had died, and when I was returning to my hotel after a meeting which was somewhat disturbing (the Boer War was then on, though the meeting had nothing to do with the Boer question; there were angry cries and interruptions). But I had forgotten this, and was walking peacefully home, when a

man who had been following us for some time, and who had none of the appearance of a rowdy, said as he passed: "Parnell's murderers!"—a phrase which, by the way, was very frequently applied to the anti-Parnellites during the lifetime of Parnell himself.

Parnell in his Constituency, December 11, 1890

After his capture of *United Ireland,* Parnell drove to Kingsbridge terminus to begin an eventful journey to Cork. He was accompanied by an immense crowd, who swept through the barriers and crowded around his carriage, cheering and calling his name. Just outside Dublin, at the big railway works in Inchicore, the railwaymen cheered for Parnell. At the many stations on the long journey to Cork, there were demonstrations, but not all of them were unanimous; there were ominous portents of that cleavage which was now irrevocable. At Monasterevan, in the County Kildare, a priest led a crowd to the carriage door and called for cheers for O'Brien, who was then being spoken of as the alternative leader. At Kildare town, on the other hand, two priests led the demonstration in favour of Parnell; and yet again at Maryborough, where a crowd had cheered him, two priests who were on the platform booed at him. Parnell was worn out by all these demonstrations—most of them of a mixed description—and he did not always show himself to the people, but merely contented himself with bowing from the window and then retiring to his seat, leaving the speech to one or other of the enthusiasts who were accompanying him. It was curious that at Thurles, which was the episcopal seat of Archbishop Croke, and where a hostile demonstration was anticipated, the enthusiasm was greatest of all. But at Mallow, which was the home town of William O'Brien,

there was an appalling scene. The door panels and ornamental woodwork of the carriage were torn away, and so menacing was the crowd that those who were travelling with Parnell tore away the iron hat-racks of the carriage to defend themselves. A priest shouted through the window, "Down with libertinism; down with blackguardism". The crowd shouted at Parnell, "Ruffian", "Coward", "Renegade", "Traitor", and one man exceeded the others in the offensiveness of his epithets. For a time it seemed that Parnell would be dragged from the carriage; but it was characteristic of him that this extremity found him outwardly the calmest of all, and he remained sitting at the window quietly looking out at the abusive mob until he was induced to retire to the far corner.

The train arrived in Cork some hours late, but fifty thousand people were waiting in spite of the drenching rain. So great was the throng that Parnell was unable to reach his carriage, and he got into a hotel bus. And thus, escorted with bands and blazing tar-barrels, he arrived at the Victoria Hotel, where he addressed an indoor meeting. I quote one passage as illustrating his old distrust of Gladstone as well as his consciousness that he was grievously ill:

"With men like you, you need not fear the loss of this trumpery Bill of Gladstone's—a Bill which would allow the police to baton our heads as they do now; a Bill which would allow the evicting landlord to desolate the country just as he does now; a Bill which would give nothing which the Irish people could not get for themselves without the Bill. . . . I have got a good opinion of this Grand Old Man—perhaps a better opinion than I ought to have; but never in the palmiest days of Gladstone and his great reputation in Ireland could I dismiss from my mind for one single instant the possibility that Ireland and Gladstone might again be in conflict, and that the day might once

more fall to my lot to come amongst you and to lead you. . . . I have a hard battle before me. I have practically been obliged to take my place at the head of this fight in sickness and pain; but I have been revived and benefited by the touch of your public opinion. Cork has done more for me, Ireland has done more for me, than all the physic and medicines in the pharmacopœia."

Those who saw Parnell in private had no illusions about what all this was costing him. "He looked", wrote Mr. Horgan, at whose house he stopped, "an old man. . . . He looked like a hunted hind; his hair was dishevelled, his beard unkempt; his eyes were wild and restless. He sat down to a chop, but he only made a pretence of eating."

In the evening he was still evidently ill. His hostess had some supper prepared for him; he would take nothing but a raw egg; he broke the egg into the tumbler and swallowed it with a gulp, and said, "That's a very good egg; may I have another?" He swallowed the second one just the same, and then said he would go to bed.

Departure for Kilkenny, December 12, 1890

Parnell left Cork the next day and went on to Kilkenny, where for ten days he flung himself heart and soul into the by-election, for which he had nominated Mr. Vincent Scully, Sir John Pope Hennessy being the candidate of the Anti-Parnellites. During this election he found sturdy allies in the old Fenians, and in reply to a taunt by Davitt that he was "appealing in his desperation to the hillside men and the Fenian sentiment of the country", he addressed them specifically from his hotel window, saying: "I have said that when it is clear to me that I can no longer hope to obtain our constitution by constitutional and parliamentary means, I will in a moment so declare it

to the people of Ireland, and returning at the head of my Party I will take counsel with you as to the next step. That, fellow-countrymen, is the nature and extent of the declaration which I made in Cork in 1880—which was accepted then by my constituents when they placed me at the head of the poll in succession to my late friend Joseph Ronayne. . . . I stand on the same ground to-night as I did then, and if the young men of Ireland have trusted me, it is because they know that I am not a mere Parliamentarian; that I can be trusted to keep my word to them to go as far as a brave and honest heart can go on this parliamentary alliance, and test it to the uttermost, and that when and if I find it useless and unavailing to persevere further, they can depend upon me to tell them so."

At Castlecomer, Davitt sent a message to Parnell proposing that both of them should speak from the same wagonette. "Tell him", said Parnell, "that I have come to fight, not to treat." Some of the posters put out by his opponents in Kilkenny fanned the flame; they denounced Parnell as a renegade, stated that his leadership was destroyed in the Divorce Court, and that the Irish Party would not have "the curse of crime" on their banner.

Parnell was everywhere in the constituency, and in one of his speeches he showed the spirit that was in him in his now desperate mood. "While I have life", he said, two days before the polling at Kilkenny, "I will go from one constituency to another, from one city to another, from one town and village and parish to another, to put what I know is the truth before the people."

But in the midst of all this there were dreadful premonitions of the coming sudden and tragic end to Parnell's mad enterprise. Here is a vivid and tragic scene: it was in the Victoria Hotel, Kilkenny—

"I was struck", says Mr. Barry O'Brien, "by the silence which prevailed. All spoke in whispers: waiters stole softly in and out. Every individual seemed anxious to make no noise. It was like the stillness of a sick-room. In a sense it was a sick-room. Stretched on a number of chairs before the fire lay Parnell, sleeping. To me he looked like a dying man. 'He's been very ill,' said Mr. J. J. O'Kelly."

Parnell's Defeat at Kilkenny, December 23, 1890

An incident took place at one of the meetings of which a great deal was heard at the time. Something was thrown at Parnell by one of the crowd; it was thought at the time that it was flour; but Parnell claimed that it was not flour but lime, and if he had not shut his eyes in time he would have been blinded. Mrs. Parnell in her account of it (doubtless taken from him) says that his eyes were not injured, and that all that came from the attack was a tiny scar on the outer edge of his right eye; he wore a shade over his eyes for some days.

It will give some indication of the blind and deadly partisanship into which the two factions had now descended that the report was spread that the whole story was an invention of Parnell, intending to seek sympathy by an account of a dastardly and cruel attack on him. But apparently the story was correct.

On the night of the polling, when his supporters were optimistically casting up the majority, he remarked that he had been well beaten, but he added: "It is only the first battle of the campaign. I will contest every election in the country. I will fight while I live."

On the day after the polling Parnell retained his composure. "There was no man in the room", writes Mr. Barry O'Brien, "at the Court House during the process of counting the votes, who seemed to be in better humour or who

looked less anxious, though he watched everything very carefully and was always on the alert, than Parnell."

When the poll was declared at one o'clock in the afternoon the figures were: Pope Hennessy, 2527 ; Scully, 1362. In the evening Parnell returned to Dublin, and was escorted by a crowd to the National Club in Rutland Square, where he made a speech denouncing Gladstone and the Liberals.

I should here make some allusion to one of the other deadly weapons that were being constantly used against Parnell. The unfortunate Mrs. O'Shea came into nearly every speech of some of the opponents of Parnell, and, with some dexterity, she was always spoken of as "Kitty" O'Shea—a name applied to her which was never used either by Parnell or her relations. To them she was always "Katie"; to Parnell "Queenie".

I should add that in some of the caricatures of the period there were pictures of her which went beyond all the bounds of good feeling. Her petticoat was constantly mentioned as either the flag under which Parnell sailed or the cloak behind which he took refuge. These things, of course, exasperated Parnell, as has been seen in some of the scenes in Committee-Room 15; but, with that strange power of wrapping himself in the thick atmosphere of his own personality and of his incredible pride, he could speak even of these insults to the woman he loved with comparative equanimity.

The *National Press* never relaxed in its attacks on Parnell, and the unhappy Mrs. O'Shea was a frequent figure both in cartoon and in articles. I remember there was a full and picturesque account of a visit which she was alleged to have made to Ireland; and among other places she was represented as visiting was the office of the *Freeman's Journal*, at the time when that journal was

vehemently supporting Parnell. Even scraps of conversation between her and the gentlemen to whom she had been introduced were reproduced. As a matter of fact, she had not visited Ireland at all, and the writer of the article knew that.

In the columns of the *National Press* were reproduced —often textually—the violent speeches which were made against Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea. In one of these speeches she was described as "a convicted British prostitute"; she was so described when she had the living Parnell to protect her; she was again so described when, lonely, broken, and half insane, she had lost Parnell. It is no wonder that Parnell lost all sense of proportion and of public duty when the woman he so deeply, so faithfully, and so blindly loved was so assailed.

When he returned to Brighton he referred to these things. "It would have really hurt my Queen", he said, "if these devils had got hold of your real name, my Queenie, or even the Katie and Dick that your relations and Willie had called you."

The Boulogne Negotiations, December 1890

In the middle of the contest in Ireland there came an entirely new development. This is the place to mention a fact which was to play an important part in the struggle between Parnell and his opponents. Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien had been sentenced by one of Mr. Balfour's courts of dependent magistrates to six months' imprisonment in connection with a meeting. As they had both been chosen by Mr. Parnell to take part in that American campaign for new funds to which I have alluded at length, it was expected that if they gave any indication of an intention to leave Ireland and thus remove themselves from

Mrs. O'Shea

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the sentence of imprisonment passed upon them—it was still subject to appeal—they would have been immediately arrested, and so the delegation to America would have been robbed of its two principal figures. A little plot was arranged by which Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien were to be brought to France from the Irish coast in a yacht under the charge of Mr. Clancy, a well-known figure in the life of Dublin, and, if I remember rightly, sub-Sheriff of the city at that moment.

It is somewhat pathetic to recall, considering the future relations of Mr. Healy with these two gentlemen, that it was from his temporary dwelling on vacation in the country that Dillon and O'Brien started to the coast; and in one of the last conversations I had with him before his death, Dillon mentioned to me that Mr. Healy, with the good-nature and hospitality of his race, put some whisky at their disposal for the journey.

They had an adventurous and almost disastrous journey to France, but landed there ultimately. It was from there also that they both started for the tour in America. They were absent, like myself, when the struggle was going on in Committee-Room 15 between Parnell and his former associates, and for some time afterwards.

At length the proposal was made that William O'Brien should sail from America for France and there enter into negotiations with Parnell in the hope of composing the struggle and bringing it to an end. Naturally, an English boat could not be used, and O'Brien started, I believe, on a boat belonging to a Dutch company, which did not touch England.

Very soon after the landing of O'Brien he sent a telegram to Mr. Dillon. I remember well Dillon's comment. He had never had much faith in negotiations with Parnell; and, though he had not a cynical, he had a clear, judg-

ment of men and things, and his comment on O'Brien's telegram was something like "Completely captured by Parnell".

Mr. Dillon goes to Boulogne

I should say here that Dillon acted always under great difficulties when any question arose with regard to Parnell. He had such a conspicuous place in the eyes of the Irish people, had inspired such affection and confidence in them—had, in short, so much prestige—that he alone could be considered among the associates of Parnell as capable of ever stepping into Parnell's place. Dillon had plenty of self-confidence and many of the greatest qualities of leadership, and morally was far superior to Parnell, in his absolute and undivided regard for the interests of his country. But neither he nor anybody else at that time could replace Parnell, nor do I believe that he ever had the smallest desire to do so.

Before the split the ardent Parnellites (I was one of the most ardent: there was scarcely one of the innumerable articles I was writing at the time in which I did not use my opportunity of magnifying the gifts and the position of Parnell), the Parnellites, as I say, always had a morbid suspicion of Dillon; and with some humiliation I now avow that I did have these suspicions, though I always had an unconquerable personal affection for Dillon —but the suspicion was there. I watched him with some scrutiny—perhaps unconscious—during those trying days after the divorce proceedings when we were in America together, and especially when I submitted to him and to my other colleagues the draft of the first telegram we sent after the divorce proceedings, when we announced in strong language our determination to stand by Parnell.

Mr. Dillon made use of an observation with regard to the telegram which I rather reproved in my own mind at the time. He knew Ireland better than any of us, as I have often said, and sometimes had a quite uncanny insight as to what the future in Ireland might be. The observation he made was, as he shook his head, "It is a strong challenge". Mr. T. P. Gill, who also showed greater appreciation of the complexities and difficulties that were afterwards to arise, discussed with me the attitude of Ireland, and he expressed the opinion that Dillon had come nobly through the ordeal.

But now Dillon himself was to be dragged into the hideous conflict. When O'Brien cabled the terms suggested by Parnell at Boulogne—including O'Brien's own succession to the chairmanship—I asked Dillon if it would be popular, and his reply was that it would be popular enough; but, of course, he realized the difficulty, and he suspected the good faith of the other terms with which Parnell accompanied the offer of the leadership to O'Brien. Anyhow, the appeals of O'Brien to him to come over to Europe could no longer be disregarded, and in some sickness of heart, and with no real hopes of any success in the negotiations with Parnell, he sailed—avoiding, like Mr. O'Brien, an English vessel—to France, and the Boulogne negotiations were renewed, with him as one of the negotiators. But with the increasing bitterness in Ireland reacting there, they broke down and were abandoned.

Parnell's Attacks on Gladstone

Mr. Barry O'Brien once spoke to Parnell on the subject of his personal attacks on Mr. Gladstone. "He said, 'What have I said?' I replied, 'You remember as well as I.' 'I called him an old gentleman,' he said; 'well, he is an old

gentleman; there is no harm in that.' I said, 'I wish you would take this matter seriously.' 'Well, but,' he repeated, 'what have I said? What have I called him? Tell me.' 'Well,' I rejoined, 'you will probably smile, but it is not after all a smiling matter—you called him "a grand old spider". I met Morley (who is not unfriendly to you) in the lobby and he said, "Do you think I can have anything to do with a man who called Mr. Gladstone 'a grand old spider'?"' Parnell smiled and answered, 'I think that is complimentary—spinning all kinds of webs and devices, that's just what he does!' I said, 'I wish you would take this matter seriously. It is really unworthy of you. No man has avoided personalities all these years more than you. Why should you descend to them now?' Parnell (angrily): 'You all come to me to complain. I am fighting with my back to the wall, and every blow I hit is criticized by my friends. You all forget how I am attacked. You only come to find fault with me. You are all against me.' I said, 'I do not think you ought to say that. If I were against you I would not be here. I do not come as Mr. Gladstone's friend; I come as yours because I feel it is unworthy of you.' 'You are right,' he said, suddenly placing his hand on my shoulder, 'personal abuse is wrong. I have said these things and forgotten them as soon as I have said them. But you are right in talking about it.' "

But as the months of angry controversy went on Parnell did not moderate his language. He called Justin M'Carthy "this hillside man of two years' service". In July, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which was represented by John Morley, he again made an indirect attack upon Gladstone. Among the last words Morley spoke to him, he declared, were an expression of apprehension that Ireland would be profoundly disappointed and discontented when she found on the coming of the Liberals into office how

very little they would be able to do for her. "I do not distrust Mr. Morley," he went on; "I never have distrusted him. I know that he is one of the very few Englishmen—perhaps the only Englishman in Parliament—whose record on the Irish question has been consistent from first to last. He has never been a Coercionist, he has never supported exceptional laws against Ireland, and he has always been a Home Ruler—always." If the Liberal Party was composed mainly of Morleys, he added, he should not perhaps have pressed so strongly for guarantees as he had done. And he went on to say that not one out of every three members of the Liberal Party believed in Home Rule for Ireland.

About this time Parnell appealed in the London Court of Bankruptcy to have set aside Captain O'Shea's claim to enforce £778, being the petitioner's taxed costs. Parnell pleaded non-jurisdiction on the ground that he lived in Ireland, and further he entered a counter-claim against O'Shea amounting to £3600 in respect to money advanced to and paid for and on his account by Parnell between September 1889 and November 1890. Parnell and O'Shea attended the sitting, and it was held by the Court that Parnell's occupation of rooms at Brighton constituted an English residence. Parnell's counsel made no attempt to press his suit for the £3600.

Irish Bishops' Pronouncement, June 1891

At the annual meeting at Maynooth College in June 1891 of the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, with Cardinal Logue in the chair, the following resolution was proposed by Archbishop Walsh of Dublin, seconded by Archbishop Croke, and signed by all the members of the hierarchy except Dr. O'Dwyer, the Bishop of Limerick—

"That we the Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland, assembled in general meeting for the first time since the issuing of the declaration of our standing committee last December, hereby record the solemn expression of our judgment as pastors of the Irish people that Mr. Parnell, by his public misconduct, has utterly disqualified himself to be the political leader; that since the issuing of that declaration Mr. Parnell's public action and that of his recognized agents and organs in the press, especially their open hostility to ecclesiastical authority, has supplied new and convincing proof that he is wholly unworthy of the confidence of Catholics, and we therefore feel bound on this occasion to call on our people to repudiate his leadership.'

In a leading article on this pronouncement of the Bishops the *National Press* said—

"It will require more than the mouthings of a deposed and degraded man and the servile echoes of his followers to persuade the people that their faithful pastors are traitors to them."

Yet here and there were priests like Father Bernard O'Neill, the parish priest of Bagenalstown, who rebuked his curates for having canvassed the parishioners, and not only nominated the Parnellite candidate for Carlow, but advised all his people to vote for him. But the hope which the abstention of the Bishop of Limerick from the Bishops' resolution seemed to hold out to Parnellite priests was soon dissipated by an emphatic declaration from that prelate that he stood by his episcopal colleagues. Bishop O'Dwyer wrote—

"From the commencement I have felt that no honourable Irishman could hold up his head before the world if he were so wanting in self-respect as to maintain as the leader of the nation a man stained by the offences against the moral law of which Mr. Parnell has been convicted."

The "Freeman's Journal" changes over, July–August 1891

On July 31 the *Freeman's Journal,* which had hitherto supported Parnell, published a letter from Mr. Edward Dwyer Gray, who held a controlling interest in the company.

"Mr. Parnell by his recent marriage", he wrote, "has rendered it impossible that he should ever be recognized by the Catholic hierarchy as the leader of the Catholic people of Ireland. . . . The marriage is no marriage according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, and it is simply preposterous to think of carrying on the national movement under a leader to whom the Church is unanimously opposed."

For a few days the *Freeman's Journal* swung this way and that, and then went boldly over to the opponents of Parnell.

About this time a parish priest in Clare removed a Mrs. White from the office of President of the Sacred Heart Sodality, to which he had appointed her for her hitherto exemplary conduct, because her name was on a list of those reported to have been present in the balcony while a Parnellite convention was taking place in Dublin; thus the poor woman was held to countenance "Parnell and all his abominations". Mr. Healy was so moved at this time that he threatened at Kilkenny that if he could not convince Parnell by reason he would drive him mad.

In Carlow and in North Sligo, Parnell's candidate was beaten. He was losing the fight. The Bishops had declared against him, and the pulpits; and Dillon and O'Brien. And with all these forces against him he went down two months before his death to Thurles, the capital of the see of Cashel, which was then occupied by Archbishop Croke. It was said at the time that in one school in

the town the children had been made to offer up prayers that supernatural intervention might keep Parnell away from Thurles. But he went there on that Sunday in August, and there was again a scene of enthusiasm, the horses of his wagonette being unyoked while willing hands drew the shafts. He showed himself quite fearless in the controversy, and spoke of "ecclesiastical direction and dictation taking the place of the public and free will of the country". He treated the antagonism of Mr. Dillon and Mr. O'Brien with sarcastic levity. He said it was well to have a peg to hang one's arguments on, and now he had two pegs. "I have proposed no new policy for Ireland," he declared; "I have not varied; Mr. Dillon has varied. Mr. Dillon says that the Liberals must introduce a Bill to settle the Irish question next year, or he will drive them from office. Well, I would not have minded giving them a longer term of grace than that."

At Kells, two Sundays later, he used the phrase "Gladstone the Coercionist" and replied to the charges that he had evaded communication with the Liberal leader. "I never withdrew myself anywhere after the verdict," he said. "After the verdict I stayed in the same place as I was before, and this verdict was not such a thunderclap to the Liberals as they sought to make out. In my interview with Mr. Morley nine days before the verdict he left the interview knowing very well that the case was going against me. In fact he knew it before he came to that interview at all, and his great anxiety expressed to me was that I should not retire from my position in public life, no matter what happened at the trial. These are the poor innocent leaders whom I deceived and kept in the dark and withdrew myself from into unapproachable solitudes. Mr. Gladstone had nine days before and nine days after the verdict to make up his mind. There is no question

whatever, in my judgment, that Mr. Gladstone had made up his mind that I ought not to retire until he was kicked into taking a different attitude by the Nonconformist conscience."

Marriage with Mrs. O'Shea, June 25, 1891

Three months before his death, Parnell was married to Mrs. O'Shea by the registrar at Steyning, nine miles from their home at Brighton. Parnell adopted a ruse to circumvent the newspaper men. He told his manservant that he would be required as a witness, and that he was to await them near the house with Parnell's favourite horse, Dictator, in the phaeton at eleven o'clock on the wedding day, June 25. This information the young man, whose measure Parnell had taken, passed on to the newspaper scouts. But on the 25th Parnell rose before six o'clock, ordered a sleepy groom to tackle Dictator, and woke up his bride, calling gaily: "Get up, get up, it is time to be married!" The maid Phyllis, whom I have previously mentioned, and the old nurse of Mrs. O'Shea's children were the witnesses to the marriage. As Phyllis was fastening a posy at her mistress's breast, Parnell entered with white roses, saying: "She must wear mine to-day, Phyllis, but she shall carry yours, and you shall keep them in remembrance".

Parnell brought the phaeton round from the stables and held the horse's head, while he sent the groom away to have a hurried breakfast; he gave the boy a "buttonhole", telling him not to put it on until they were some distance on the road. The bride took the reins, and she tells how Parnell said to her: "Queenie, you look lovely in that lace stuff and the beautiful hat with the roses!" The registrar's wife had bravely decorated the gloomy registry with flowers, and before the ceremony Parnell looked in

the mirror, adjusted his white rose in his frock coat, and playfully blew reflected kisses to his bride. On the return journey he drew up the hood of the phaeton, saying: "How could I kiss you good wishes for our married life unless we were hooded up like this?" He displayed great satisfaction when they passed the frustrated newspaper men, driving towards the registry at a gallop. To other reporters assembled outside the house, Parnell said: "Let Mrs.Parnell pass! I'll see you presently". There was no wedding cake, as Parnell said the sight of a rich cake always made him ill. Parnell rebuked the maid Phyllis for addressing her mistress, of old habit, as Mrs. O'Shea. According to his lifelong custom, he ignored the letters and telegrams—some, I regret to say, of an abusive nature—that poured in upon him. But he was greatly pleased with one simple message of goodwill, which his wife showed him "from six Irish girls". In the evening he said to his wife: "The storms and the thunderings will never hurt us now, Queenie, my wife, for there is nothing in the wide world that can be greater than our love; there is nothing in all the world but you and I".

In Ireland the marriage had the opposite reaction to that which Parnell had hoped. The clergy were roused to wrath; Archbishop Walsh of Dublin and Archbishop Croke of Cashel renewed their condemnation of Parnell. Those of the younger clergymen who had wavered, now definitely opposed him. To the ecclesiastical mind Parnell's marriage was looked upon as a blatant flaunting of his sin. From that hour he was politically doomed.

CHAPTER XVI

The last phase—Parnell seeks companionship—A night at the opera—Secession of the *Freeman's Journal*—The last meeting at Creggs—Dying man's activity in Dublin—The return to Brighton—Last talks with Mrs. Parnell—Death.

The Tragedy deepens

I RETURN to the fierce campaign in Ireland. Parnell, outwardly and when he appeared on the platform, was as full of confidence as ever. One of his peculiarities was great patience, especially on the question of time. Even when he was carrying on this fierce fight for the retention of his leadership, he never expected to win easily or soon. It is curious, considering the self-confidence which he so openly expressed, that he did not look for immediate success. Speaking to Mr. Barry O'Brien, who was a strong and confidential friend, he said that it would take him five years to reassert his position. Five years, in the then state of Irish politics, with Ireland expecting at once the early advent to power of Gladstone with a considerable majority, would have seemed an eternity, and it was indeed hard to reconcile the Irish people, who were expecting Home Rule in a year, to find themselves condemned by their old chief to a long wait of five years, with all the possibilities of disruption and with division in their ranks.

Parnell's attitude of mind on this and other occasions was well expressed in a saying of his to one of his colleagues: "My colleagues run to that point when it would be equally easy for them to walk to it". It is also a pathetic revelation, considering the sequel, that Parnell over and over

again expressed the confident belief that he had still many years of life before him. When talking with Mr. Barry O'Brien, and discussing the period at which Home Rule might be expected to arrive, he said, "Remember, Gladstone is an old man, and he cannot wait"; and then he went on: "I am a young man, and I can afford to wait".

At the same time, and in spite of these confident utterances, and in spite of the brave show he made before the people, he had, as has been seen, great moments of physical prostration and great moments of mental depression. "I saw a good deal of him during the last campaign," said Mr. Patrick O'Brien, a member of our Party, and an inflexible adherent of Parnell; and then he goes on: "He used often to feel very lonely and never wished to be long by himself". During one of their visits to Dublin, Parnell pressed him to stay to dinner. When Mr. O'Brien pleaded that he had an appointment—it was with a sister of Parnell (Mrs. Dickenson), a very wild creature, to go to the opera—Parnell said, "Do you want to get away? . . . If you have nothing special to do I should like you to stop with me, as I feel rather lonely."

Mr. O'Brien goes on: "'Well, the fact is, Mr. Parnell, I am thinking of going to the theatre'.

"'Oh', he said, 'it is twenty-four years since I was at a theatre, and I think I should like to go'.

"I said, 'Very well. Shall I get places for both of us?' and he said, 'Yes, I think I should like to go'.

"I then went off to the National League, very glad, because I thought I should have a surprise, both for Mrs. Dickenson and Parnell, as neither would expect the other to come."

Mrs. Dickenson, however, could not keep the appointment, and, Mr. O'Brien goes on, "I then returned to Parnell, and we both set off for the Gaiety".

A Night at the Opera

I make no scruple in quoting the passages from Mr. O'Brien which conclude the story of this evening—which has its importance, dramatic and otherwise, as one of the last glimpses of Parnell before he disappeared into the night of his early and unexpected death. "The place was tremendously full, but when the box-keeper saw Parnell standing there, he said, 'He must come in, no matter what happens'.

"We then went to the dress circle, getting a front place. Parnell's appearance created quite a sensation. The opera had just commenced, but people kept turning round constantly, looking at him. He got a book of the opera, and seemed to follow the performance with great interest. . . . As soon as the curtain fell on the first act, everyone turned round—stalls, dress circle, pit, boxes—to level their opera-glasses at him. A number of men—high Tories—came out of the stalls and walked along the passage at the back of the circle, looking at him through the glass partition. . . . He seemed quite unconscious of all this.

"When the opera was over, a tremendous crowd collected outside to watch him leave. He said to me: 'Now we shall go away'. He had not the most remote conception of the excitement which his presence caused, and he thought he might walk away as an ordinary spectator; but the truth was, all the passages were blocked, and the street was simply impassable in front. I said, 'Well, the fact is, Mr. Parnell, you cannot get away unless you walk on the heads of the people outside'. He smiled and said, 'Oh, very well, we will wait if you like; or perhaps there may be a secret way by which we can get out'. There was a secret way . . . and so we escaped the throng. As we walked along Grafton Street he said, 'I remember there

used to be a very good oyster-shop somewhere here; let us go and have some oysters'. We could not find the shop. . . . However, I knew another supper place, and we went there. The manager of the place was delighted to see Parnell. We walked upstairs and had a room to ourselves. The manager asked Parnell to put his name in his autograph book. Parnell said, 'Certainly', and when he opened the book the first name that caught his eye, amid a host of celebrities, was his mother's. 'Oh,' said he, 'has my mother been here too?' as he signed his name.

"We remained until two in the morning. We then walked to Morrison's [Hotel], and I bade him good-bye and prepared to set out for the National Club. Parnell said, 'Well, I think I will walk with you to the National Club', and away we went. When we got to the National Club, of course I returned to Morrison's with Parnell, and when we got there he said, 'I think I will come back with you to the National Club again.' 'Well, Mr. Parnell,' I said, 'if you do, we will keep walking about the streets all the night.' He said, 'I do not care; I do not like to be alone'. However I insisted on his going to Morrison's and went off to the Club."

This dread of being left alone was a constant background to the tumultuous front of his public meetings and his confident speeches. Here is another glimpse of Parnell. It is an astounding revelation of his unconquerable spirit, in spite of his realization of his difficulties.

A Scene at Euston

"I saw Parnell for the last time", says Mr. Barry O'Brien, "towards the end of the summer at Euston Station. He was starting on his weekly visit to Ireland. I was at the station by appointment to talk over some

business matters with him. He arrived about ten minutes before the train started. Having despatched the business in his quiet, ready way, not in the least disturbed by the bustle on the platform or the fact that the train would be off in a very short time, he said quietly and leisurely, 'I should like to know what you think will be the result of the General Election?' I answered, 'I should think that you will come back with about five followers, and I should not be surprised if you came back absolutely alone.' 'Well,' he answered impassively, 'if I do come back absolutely alone, one thing is certain—I shall then represent a party whose independence will not be sapped.' At this point the guard blew his whistle and the train began to move. 'Ah,' said Parnell, 'the train is going,' and without the least hurry he walked quietly forward. Several porters rushed up and said, 'Where is your carriage, Mr. Parnell?' He said, 'I have no carriage'. Then a door was opened; the guard said, 'Will you get in here, Mr. Parnell?' 'No,' said he, 'I don't like that.' Then another carriage door was opened. 'No,' he said again; 'I don't like that.' The idea of his being left behind seemed never to occur to him. The train was slowed down, Parnell walked along, passing one or two carriages; then suddenly he peeped into one, where he saw Mr. Carew, M.P. 'Ah,' said he, 'there is Carew; I'll get in here.' The train by this time was stopped. He got in. Then the train started again, and he lowered the window, and, with a pleasant smile lighting up his pale, sad face, waved me a last adieu."

And, finally, there is a good deal of pathos in one of his last letters which was written to his mother. There had been all kinds of rumours—many of them wrong—with regard to his treatment of his mother: he had, I am sure, been uniformly kind and considerate to her, and this is what he said—

"I am weary, dear mother, of these troubles, weary unto death; but it is all in a good cause. With health and the assistance of my friends I am confident of the result. The statements my enemies have so often made regarding my relations with you are on a par with the endless calumnies they shoot upon me from behind every bush. Let them pass. They will die of their own venom. It would indeed be dignifying them to notice their existence."

There were other minor annoyances. He had issued what was something like a challenge to Mr. Maurice Healy, his colleague in the representation of Cork, that they should test the feeling of Cork by both resigning and again contesting the constituency. Mr. Maurice Healy promptly took up the challenge, and, possibly because his friends told him of the doubtfulness of the result, Parnell had to get out of the challenge as well as he could.

Parnell without a Daily Newspaper

But the greatest of all the blows he received in the midst of this fierce fight for his life was in the defection of the *Freeman's Journal*, which had been one of his greatest supports in the early days of the struggle, in season and out of season, in language as violent as that of the speeches which were then being made all over Ireland by the leading combatants in the struggle. The paper had passed under the control of young Mr. Gray, to whom I have already alluded.

The *Freeman's Journal* was a paper read mainly by what might be called the bourgeoisie, and the middle classes as a whole were, as I have more than once said, against Parnell. The circulation began to dwindle, the shares to descend to a formidable discount. The situation was still more aggravated for the *Freeman's Journal* by the starting of the *National Press*. The capital for this

journal was subscribed with enthusiasm and with promptitude. Many of the priesthood were among the shareholders; it had also succeeded in attracting to it a large number of clever men; above all, it had the advantage of the mordant pen of Mr. T. M. Healy, who was a born journalist and a very brilliant and, above all, a very biting writer. It jumped into a large circulation almost immediately, and undoubtedly the *Freeman's Journal*—in spite of its long record of more than a century's existence—was face to face with disaster. In panic the old newspaper, under the direction of young Mr. Gray, made a *volte-face*—the ostensible reason it gave for the secession being Parnell's marriage to Mrs. O'Shea—and Parnell was left without an organ in the Dublin daily Press.

Parnell's Journey to Creggs, September 26, 1891

And now I come to the meeting which was the immediate cause of his death. This meeting was called near Creggs, a remote village in the county of Roscommon, and it was a long journey from Brighton to there. Parnell had come over, as usual, on one of his week-end trips from Brighton; but already he had the signs of severe illness. He wrote to Dr. Kenny, his friend and physician, on his arrival in Dublin on the Saturday morning at Morrison's Hotel, asking him to go and see him, as "I am not feeling very well", with the postscript: "Do not mention that I am unwell to anybody, lest it should get into the newspapers".

Dr. Kenny at once saw the seriousness of the illness; Parnell was suffering from acute rheumatism and general debility. Dr. Kenny pleaded with him not to go to the meeting, but Parnell replied that he had given his word to the people and would keep it.

And so Parnell set out for the fatal meeting at Creggs. He, as had become a habit with him, insisted on having companionship on his journey; his companions were the reporters of the newspapers—Mr. Hobson, of the *Freeman's Journal,* and Mr. Russell. He had also with him Mr. Quinn, an official of the National League, as the great Irish organization was called.

"I accompanied Mr. Parnell to Creggs", wrote Mr. Hobson afterwards, "on his last visit. He wore his arm in a sling. He sent Quinn for me; I joined them. Russell was also with us, and we travelled together. He talked about the defection of the *Freeman's Journal* and about the new paper he intended to start, the *Irish Independent.* The whole conversation was on this subject, and he was very sanguine of success."

I interrupt this narrative to comment on an incident which occurred. It is an incident which displays that kindness of heart and even chivalry which sometimes broke through the ruthlessness of Parnell. The reader may remember how, when I arrived at the railway station in Galway in the midst of the fateful and fatal election of Captain O'Shea, a blow seemed to have been aimed at me, and how Parnell, seeing this, immediately turned and placed his arm in mine, as though to protect me from what might have been a formidable attack by the infuriated mob which was seething around us, and I always felt grateful to Parnell.

Mr. Hobson had to recount a very similar episode. "I went to the meeting", says Mr. Hobson, "before Parnell arrived. I got a warm reception. The people shouted, 'Throw out the *Freeman* reporters!' Things were getting hot for me when a burly figure forced its way through the crowd and called out, 'Where is the *Freeman's* reporter?' A number of angry voices answered, 'Here!' 'Mr. Parnell

wants him,' said the man. He then beckoned to me; the people made way, and I walked towards him. We then went to a public-house where Parnell was seated in a room. He said, 'I sent for you as I thought you might like to have a talk with me before the meeting'." And then Mr. Hobson adds this generous recognition of Parnell's magnanimity: "The fact was, he had heard that they were likely to make it hot for me, and resolved to take me under his wing".

And here is another incident that also illustrates Parnell's sensitiveness. On the journey to Creggs there was a large crowd at Athlone Station to meet him, headed by a torchlight procession, and he was compelled to speak, though suffering intense pain. When the train began to move away it was found that an old man named Fallon, who had come to meet Parnell, had fallen or been pushed on to the line and had been run over by the train and killed. When Parnell heard of this he cried, "Good God! Good God!" and collapsed into a seat. "I have never seen him so deeply affected by anything," said Mr. Quinn; "and he walked up and down the carriage for some time in deep thought, and a long interval elapsed before he again became himself." It was midnight when he arrived at Roscommon, but he was met by another torchlight procession and had again to make a speech.

I dwell a little on this journey of Parnell for the obvious reason that it was to be the last Irish meeting Parnell ever attended; that it was the forerunner of the unexpected catastrophe in which his career was to end; and that every incident in it heightened the tragedy that immediately followed. The Creggs meeting killed Parnell; it was the Gethsemane which preceded and led up to his Calvary.

The Last Speech at Creggs, September 27, 1891

There was another episode on this fatal journey the description of which we owe to the pen of Mr. Russell, the other reporter on whose presence in his carriage Parnell insisted.

"I went," writes Mr. Russell, "with Parnell to Creggs. He said, coming along in the train, 'I am very ill. Dr. Kenny told me that I ought not to come, but I have promised the people to come, and I will keep my word.' We stopped at the same hotel. I remember one incident, illustrating his superstition. He thought it unlucky to pass anyone on the stairs. I was descending the stairs as he was coming up, with a candlestick in his hand, going to bed. He had got up five or six steps when he saw me, and remained at the bottom till I came down, and then wished me good-night."

Parnell made his last public speech under the most dispiriting conditions. He telegraphed to his wife before the meeting that it was "terrible weather". He spoke in the open air, as usual, and it rained incessantly. Someone raised an umbrella over his head, but he signed for it to be taken down. He had one of his arms in a sling. His speech was laboured at the beginning, and the reporters took down the first part in long-hand. But although he was all the time in pain, he seemed to lay his illness by as he went along, and ended on a passionate note.

And then comes the return to Dublin—a tragic night both in its immediate circumstance and in view of the early and awful sequel. Parnell again showed that craving for companionship of which he had given so many examples in these last days.

"I travelled with him", writes Mr. Russell, "next day at his request. He was very ill and suffered much pain, but he talked all the way and would not let me sleep. He

said, 'You can take a Turkish bath when you arrive in Dublin, and that will make you all right'. We parted at Broadstone terminus, but I never saw him again."

When Parnell arrived in Dublin, instead of going back to Brighton—as he should have done with the possibility of arresting his growing illness—he found himself compelled to remain. He had by this time come to the decision to start a daily paper, to replace the advocacy which he had lost from the *Freeman's Journal*. I have heard some tragic details of the difficulties which he encountered in carrying out his enterprise. I do not remember the exact details, but my recollection is that he called on man after man of his supporters—I have already said that Dublin was and remained solidly behind him—and that in many, if not in most, cases he found the potential subscriber unable to see him for one reason or another: in most cases the man he called upon found it advisable to leave word that he was not at home—he took good care not to be.

Meantime, the poor man was becoming steadily worse. He looked, to his friends, ill and fatigued, and the pains in his hand and arm became acute. Doubtless with a view to shortening the hours of solitude, with their blackening of every care and also the pains of rheumatism, he stopped up as late as he could, and he held long conversations with his friends. It was evidence of the tremendous and unconquerable resolution of the man that, though he had to lie on a sofa while he was talking to them, he spoke with inflexible resolution and tenacity, and never even alluded to his illness and his pain. Mark the astounding self-confidence of this declaration by a man who, unknown to himself though perhaps foreboded by the loving friends who listened to him and watched him, was sick unto death: "It is only a matter of time; the fight may be long or short, but we will win in the end".

He even went to a meeting on Wednesday, September 30, to confer with those who were helping him to found his new paper. But it was observed that he looked very ill, and that once or twice he had to take brandy to support himself. I may here add one of the incidents during his electioneering campaign at Sligo—where there was a by-election on which he had fought and lost. He was observed one morning, if not more, to seek that stimulant to a man with broken strength which consists of brandy and Worcester sauce.

Parnell leaves Dublin, September 30, 1891

At the end of the meeting of the *Daily Independent* supporters, the lure of Mrs. Parnell and of Brighton once more came upon him, and he announced that he was going to England that night. Dr. Kenny, his warm friend as well as his physician, in vain protested against a journey so long and so fatiguing in the then state of his health, asserting that his symptoms threatened an aggravation of his illness. But there was never any use in trying to dissuade Parnell from any course on which he had determined: still less was it possible to fight against that magnetic attraction exercised by the woman whom he so profoundly loved and who loved him equally well. Assuredly there was nothing to cause either surprise or scandal that this sorely beset man should seek refuge on that bosom where mutual devotion had made two beings one. However, to Brighton Parnell was determined to go. There was epic tragedy, though nobody knew it at the time—and least of all Parnell—in his reply to the remonstrances of his friends against the journey on account of the state of his health. "Oh, no", was the reply of Parnell. "I shall be all right. I shall come back next

Saturday week." Which indeed he did, but as a corpse in his coffin.

So Parnell, in spite of all remonstrance and of the state of his health, returned to Brighton. Mrs. Parnell had received the usual series of telegrams which he always sent when he was absent from her. These telegrams were alarming, especially when he wired from Creggs that it was "terrible weather". But Mrs. Parnell was somewhat consoled by the thought that she had put a special change of clothes into a bag for him and he had promised not to be parted from it. "So I knew that he would find means of changing his clothes and things directly after the meeting"—as to which, as will be seen presently, there was a tragic incident.

And then there was the homecoming. It is one of the moving scenes that led up to the terrible *dénouement*, a station on the way to the Calvary which was already almost in sight. He seemed to be very sick when he got out of the buggy which his wife had sent to meet him, and there a characteristic incident occurred. He had a favourite horse called Dictator, and Dictator was drawing the buggy. The anxious wife, however, had sent also a closed fly as safer; but Parnell, characteristically, would not have anything but the buggy with Dictator drawing it. When he arrived he was so weak that his wife had to help him into the house, and then he sank into his own chair before the blazing fire she had made, in spite of the warm weather. "Oh, my wife", he said, "it is good to be back! You may keep me a bit now."

The Homecoming to Brighton, October 1, 1891

Then she began to reproach him for his travelling immediately after the Turkish bath he had had in London;

but he maintained it had done him good. After he had eaten a fairly good dinner, she told him she wanted to have Sir Henry Thompson down the next day. "He laughed", she said, "at the idea, but I was very much in earnest, and he said he would see how he felt in the morning." Then he gave her an account of what he had gone through during his last visit to Ireland. He had, he said, to keep his arm in the sling all the time.

And then came the tragic episode of the change of clothes which she had packed separately in a small bag, and which he was never to be parted from. He had to explain that the bag had been taken home in error by his host, and that thus he had to sit in his wet things for the hours of the meeting and under the rain. "I was much vexed", says Mrs. Parnell, "when I heard this, for I always made such a point of his not keeping on damp things, and provided against it so carefully when starting him off."

My readers will remember the mysterious bag with which he came in to the State trial every day, the mystery of which finally was solved in its being found to contain a pair of fresh socks which Mrs. O'Shea had insisted on his carrying every day to the court.

He went further into his experiences, confessing that he had found it difficult to eat the breakfast prepared by his friends, who were all so kind to him. "I do hate being away from home," he said, "especially when I feel ill."

And then came the final hours before he had to take to his bed. After dinner he sat before the fire trying to smoke a cigar, but presently he threw it away half-smoked. And here came a characteristic episode.

"He wanted to 'feel' I was there", says Mrs. Parnell, " so I sat by his feet on the rug and leant my head against his knee while he stroked my hair. I stopped his hand because I feared the pain might come on again, and held

it while he smiled assent to my suggestion that he should try to sleep a little. Grouse and Pincher, our setter and terrier, had to come close by us, and as they settled by his feet, he said: 'This is really a beautiful rest'."

She goes on—

"He dozed now and then, and I could see how wan and exhausted the still, clear-cut face was, and I vowed to myself that he should not again leave my care until his health was completely re-established."

And then this happened—

"Presently he asked for his stick and wanted to go into the other room for a while, but he could not walk without my assistance—his legs were too weak to support him. I was terribly worried now, but did not let him see it, and only said: 'Now you are up you must let me help you to bed, so that you can get all the rest you need—and you are not going to leave home again till you take me for a real honeymoon in a country where the sun is strong enough to get the cold out of your bones. We will get out of England this winter.' And he answered: 'So we will, Wifie, directly I get that mortgage through'."

Then she goes on—

"As we made our painful way up the stairs—for the last time—he laughed at the Irish setter, who was trying to help him lift the stick he used, and said: 'Grouse thinks we are doing this for his own special benefit'. I undressed him and got him into bed, and he said: 'Come and lie down as quickly as you can, Wifie', but I rubbed him with the firwood oil and packed his arm in the wool he so much believed in before I lay down.

"He dozed off", she goes on, "but woke shortly, and could not sleep again." Then he asked if he should follow the prescription of Dr. Kenny in Dublin by taking some champagne.

"During the night I made him promise that he would see a doctor in the morning. Presently he said: 'I would

rather write to Thompson, as he understands me'. I said I would telegraph to him to come down, but this excited my husband, who said, 'No, the fee would be enormous at this distance'."

This was very characteristic of Parnell, who, as I have more than once said, was in money matters rather "near".

Last Days, October 2-6, 1891

He felt better the next morning, and was much happier about himself, but still absolutely refused to send for Sir Henry Thompson. "And, sitting up in bed after a good breakfast", says Mrs. Parnell, "he smoked a cigar while he wrote notes for a speech."

And then there was this curious little episode—

"During his last absence", says Mrs. Parnell, "I had bought a large engraving of Lord Leighton's picture 'Wedded', and, seeing this hanging in the room, he made me bring it and put it up at the foot of the bed for him to see. He was very much amused at the muscular young couple in the picture, and waving his cigar at it said: "We are a fine pair, Wifie; hang us up where I can look at us'."

Then they had to return to prosaic business. She had an agreement ready for him to sign to rent a house near Merstham, Surrey, so that they could get to London more quickly, and have a change from the sea. "It was", she said, "a pretty little country house, and he had taken great interest in it." But she would not let him sign the agreement then, or do any business, but he made her read it to him, and said that "part of their *real* 'honeymoon' should be spent there".

Then he insisted upon writing to his solicitor—his brother-in-law—Mr. MacDermott—about a mortgage he was raising to pay the legal expenses of the divorce, and

possibly to make some provision for her, and therefore he wanted to have the matter completed quickly. "It was not completed, owing to his death"—is the pathetic and fateful comment.

There was a restless night, during which the unfortunate Mrs. Parnell did her best to ease his pain by massage, and during which Parnell talked of his hopes for the Irish peasantry. Two local Brighton doctors were sent for and apparently they restored confidence to him.

Parnell had by this time become anxious about himself. As Mrs. Parnell over and over again insists, and, as everybody knew who was in any intimacy with him, he had always a great dread of death, and it did not require much illness to convince him that death might be coming to him. One of his superstitions was that he would die if he had two sleepless nights in succession.

Death of Parnell, aet. 45, *October* 6, 1891

On Monday, the next day, he was in great pain, "and asked my help", says Mrs. Parnell, "to fight against it". He tried to get out of bed, but was too weak to stand, and his wife had gently to force him back and cover him up, telling him that a chill would be dangerous. "Hold me tight, then, yourself, till I can fight those others", he said.

"Then he seemed to doze for a few minutes", goes on Mrs. Parnell, "and when he opened his eyes again it was to ask me to lie down beside him and put my hand in his, so that he could 'feel' I was there.

"I did so", she continues, "and he lay quite still, quite happy again, and spoke of the 'sunny land' where we would go as soon as he was better. 'We will be so happy, Queenie; there are so many things happier than politics'."

Again there was a sleepless night, and the next morning he was very feverish, with a bright colour on his usually

white face. "I wanted to send the dogs from the room", says Mrs. Parnell, "because I feared they would disturb him, but he opened his eyes and said, 'Not Grouse; let old Grouse stay; I like him there'."

Another feverish day, with his eyes closed, "just smiling", says Mrs. Parnell, "if I touched him". He dozed during the evening. Suddenly and rather late he opened his eyes and said, "Kiss me, sweet Wifie, and I will try to sleep a little".

She goes on—

"I lay down by his side, and kissed the burning lips he pressed to mine for the last time. The fire of them, fierce beyond any I had ever felt, even in his most loving moods, startled me, and as I slipped my hand from under his head, he gave a little sigh, and became unconscious. The doctor came at once, but no remedies prevailed against this sudden failure of the heart's action, and my husband died without regaining consciousness, before his last kiss was cold on my lips."

It is an indication of the tragic facts of political life and especially of political conflict, that there immediately was spread through Ireland an entirely false description of Parnell's last days and last words. It was represented that his last words were: "Give my love to my colleagues and the Irish people". "He did not make any dying speech", says Mrs. Parnell. "The last words", she goes on, "Parnell spoke were given to the wife who had never failed him, to the love that was stronger than death—'Kiss me, sweet Wifie, and I will try to sleep a little'."

On the Sunday following he fulfilled the promise he had made of returning to Ireland. It was arranged that he should be buried in Glasnevin. The return under circumstances so tragic and in death of a leader who had been so much beloved found an eloquent manifestation.

At every phase of his homecoming there was evidence of the profound affection in which he was held by the Irish people. For outside a section, all those who opposed him, however vehemently, had loved him—and in their hearts they loved him to the end. Outside his house in Walsingham Terrace, Brighton, at Clapham Junction, and at Willesden (where his coffin was transferred to the Irish mail), and again at Holyhead, crowds of his mourning countrymen stood bareheaded in the unceasing rain, their womenfolk weeping beside them. In the gloomy darkness of dawn, at Westland Row, Dublin, on the Sunday when he had come back as he had promised, the passionate, aggressive Dublin mob, which would have followed him with frantic love into any peril, was now shaken with the tender emotion of a maiden's heart as they received into their custody the Dead Chief. In the fog and rain they bore him, with the same elemental gloom in the chambers of their hearts, to the lying-in-state in the City Hall, pausing with their precious burden for a while outside the old Parliament House in College Green. Thirty thousand people passed by his coffin, where it was laid beneath the statue of O'Connell, that still mightier tribune of the people, in the City Hall. In the afternoon a hundred and fifty thousand people joined in the funeral procession to Glasnevin, forty bands playing funeral marches, and the evening lights were long burning before, through the press of that sorrowing multitude—his last monster meeting of all—he could be committed to his cold sleep, hard by the resting-place of O'Connell. There, not far away from fresher heroes, they lie—the Uncrowned King and the Liberator—the American-Anglo-Celt and the Catholic Gael, brave soldiers in the war of liberation of Ireland, patriarchal founders of all the evolutions of her freedom.

CHAPTER XVII

My return from America—Last meeting with Parnell—His widow survives him thirty years—Her "Conversations" with Parnell—Her faithful daughter—The end of the Parnells—Family tragedies—Passing of the old home.

My last Meeting with Parnell

THE most unforgettable years of my political life were so bound up with the remarkable career of that extraordinary man that I have little to add to the story, and certainly the time has passed when one should enter into the controversy as to whether the opponents or the defenders of Parnell took the wiser course for the future of Ireland.

On my return from America I went to Ireland a very short time before Parnell's death. I was soon confronted with the certainty of having to join in a struggle which sickened me. As my boat approached the harbour I saw a friend of mine whom I recognized as the representative of an Irish paper, and immediately I was interviewed for an expression of my views. I said as little as I could beyond stating that my views remained the same as those I had expressed in America.

Shortly afterwards I went down to my own constituents, and addressed a large meeting there. I hope I may be forgiven for repeating that in expressing my dissent from the course of Parnell I did not allow myself to say anything personally insulting to him. There was a small minority in the meeting who had remained with Parnell—many of them afterwards my warm friends and supporters—but the meeting was practically unanimous.

I met Parnell only once after this meeting face to face, passing through one of the halls of the House of Commons. I could not resist going up and shaking hands with him. I was immediately struck by the extraordinary change that had come over his appearance. The last time I had seen him was at that meeting I have already described in the library of the empty House of Commons, when some colleagues and myself discussed with him our mission to America. I have already told how extraordinarily composed and, for him, how extremely well he was looking, with his face thin but healthily bronzed, and with his composure—in spite of the coming of the divorce case which hung over him—as great as at any time of his life.

The face now was bloated and pallid. I cannot say that his reception of me was cordial. I said to him, "I hope you are well", and his reply was cold and resentful. "Better than you", he said. This was enough: I never spoke to him again, and we sat in the House of Commons apart and without noticing each other.

There were some scenes there which increased my anguish over the whole tragic situation. He was avoided by some and approached by others of his now divided Party. There were scenes in which he was attacked by Mr. Healy personally and by Mr. Sexton on some rather wild proposals he had made with regard to the settlement of the Land question. He listened eagerly, and got up once or twice to attempt a correction of some of the criticisms in Mr. Sexton's speech; but on questions of figures and facts he was an unequal combatant with such a master of facts and figures as Mr. Sexton was. The conflict, however, was not fierce in its temper.

It was different in the collision between him and Mr. Healy. Parnell spoke with fierce violence; one could scarcely recognize in this man hissing out his words that

serene and frigid figure that Parnell had shown in all the fierce encounters of his previous Parliamentary life.

Mrs. Parnell, 1845–1921

I return to the other chief figure in this terrible and tragic love story. Mrs. Parnell survived her husband for thirty years. It may be said with truth that when Parnell died, so far as her intelligence was concerned, his wife died too. She varied from time to time, but her mind was never quite normal. Soon after his death her state became so acute that she had to go to a nursing home, and remained there for two years.

I have heard one of her relatives give a thrilling description of how she would get up in the middle of the night in a state of wild alarm, and call on them to go downstairs to the hall, where, as she thought, Parnell and O'Shea were fighting and attempting to kill each other.

In addition, she was always beset by pecuniary difficulties, and these were the direct consequence of the scandal of the divorce case. By the will of her devoted aunt, she was the sole heiress to that lady's magnificent fortune of two hundred thousand pounds, but her position had been so weakened that heirs direct or remote immediately began to make their claims. Lawyers of the highest standing had to be employed on the one side and the other, until ultimately the costs of the litigation amounted to many thousands of pounds. It does not require much ingenuity to make a claim against a will—undue influence, and the rest. The end of it was that the claims of some thirty-five relatives had to be satisfied before Mrs. Parnell's claim could be met.

She was not a woman who could ever be trusted with

the management of money. Though she had quite enough to keep her in comfort for the remainder of her days, it somehow slipped through her hands, and the first cause of this was the ridiculous generosity of her character. She could not refuse assistance in any case which might appeal to her sympathy. One remarkable instance of this, incredible if one did not know it to be true, was her treatment of a solicitor who had robbed her of many thousands of pounds. His defalcations were first revealed to her by Sir George Lewis, and she was asked to make some attempt to get back the large amount of money of which she had been robbed—or at least to join in the prosecution by the many other clients whom her dishonest solicitor had treated similarly. Instead of doing this, she adopted quite a different course: she actually insisted on putting up a sum of about three thousand pounds to help in defending the solicitor! Her efforts were in vain, however, for he was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for defrauding another lady, and he was struck off the rolls; and it is needless to say that she never got either the money of which she had been robbed or any of the three thousand pounds she had contributed to her despoiler's defence.

Mrs. Parnell after 1891; *aet.* 46

Another method in which she contrived to waste her fortune was her mania for taking new houses, a mania which was partially shared by Parnell in his lifetime. She took up all kinds of leases of houses, and every change of abode involved the removal of her large household—her daughters, her horses, her dogs, and her furniture. Among the places where she had houses after Parnell's death were Brighton, Merstham, Pangbourne, Folkestone, Hastings, Sandgate, Hove, Bournemouth, Maidenhead, Trematon

Castle, Saltash, Sea View (I. of W.), Teignmouth, Havant, Hayling Island, Chichester, Burnham, Worthing, East Ferring, Littlehampton—but even this long list is not complete.

At least once there were bankruptcy proceedings against her, and her goods were put up for auction. One of these incidents remains in my memory from certain insignificant facts. It used to be the custom in Ireland to present addresses to the popular favourites of the Parnell epoch. (As I write these lines I am looking at one in my own study that was presented to me.) These addresses sometimes were fairly pretty—as a rule they were illustrated in a modest and simple way, but on the whole they give an impression of the moderate means of the people who presented them. It was a manifestation of the thoroughness with which the creditors of Mrs. Parnell pursued her that a trifling little thing like this should be included in the goods that were seized.

This poor little relic of Parnell went for a few shillings.

I have heard different stories of the state of Mrs. Parnell's mind during these years that elapsed between Parnell's death and her own. She had, in spite of all her troubles, a certain strength of will which carried her through her many misfortunes, and, above all, through the death of the man to whom she gave such concentrated devotion. On the whole, however, during most of the years she was fairly normal, except for an interval when she became mentally unbalanced. Her condition became so bad that one of her sons-in-law, who was a surgeon specialist of considerable repute in Brighton, where he practised, had to advise that she be placed in an asylum; there she remained for two years under treatment. Like so many other bereaved people, she began to toy with Spiritualism: used to imagine that she heard

the voice of Parnell, and carry on long conversations with him.

Norah O'Shea

There is one other figure in this tragedy who, in many respects, is the most pathetic. Her two daughters by Parnell married and left her; but one daughter remained with her to the day of her death—never, indeed, left her side. This was Norah, who was the daughter of Captain O'Shea, and was born before the beginning of the liaison with Parnell.

No eccentricity on the part of her mother, none of the isolations by which circumstances surrounded her, ever shook Norah's devotion to her; she was with her by day and by night, in sickness and in health. She rigidly adhered to the Catholic faith to which her father belonged, and in which she had been brought up; she was a well-known figure at all the Roman Catholic churches which were within reach in the various migrations of her mother, and, even out of the small allowance she must have had, subscribed to all their charities.

She was left practically penniless at the death of her mother. I received an appeal to get her some temporary employment, and she went as a nursery governess for a while to a French family. But ultimately she resolved to become a professional nurse, and she passed her full examinations at Queen Charlotte's Hospital. She adopted her mother's maiden name of Wood, so as to avoid troublesome questions, and she was known at the hospital as Nurse Norah Wood. Characteristically, she worked too hard, with the result that she contracted that very painful disease called lupus, and of that she died. She is the Iphigenia of the family tragedy. Her devotion to her mother shines out as a beautiful ornament to this sad story.

John Howard Parnell, 1843–1923

It remains now for me to turn to the family of the other chief figure in this tragedy. Parnell had two brothers: one, John Howard, had some likeness to his brother, but it was a likeness that was rather like a caricature. He was very amiable, very harmless, and rather a stupid man. Fortunately, the Corporation of Dublin, which was mainly Parnellite, was able to find him a small job which was connected with the superintendence of the pawn offices of Ireland.

He wrote a couple of books about his brother which were not of great value; he always spoke of "Charlie" with the deepest affection. He had the Parnell inclination to go in for enterprises that promised fortune and left only debt, and poor Parnell, I am afraid, had to make up the losses. One of the projects of John Parnell was to establish a big peach industry in the State of Georgia, and I remember one evening in the House of Commons when Parnell took out of a locker a specimen of one of these peaches—and a very beautiful specimen it seemed to be. He was chased out of a seat in Parliament (to which he was entitled) by the Parnellite section, who desired to have the seat occupied by one they thought could give them more effective assistance. John Parnell lived to a considerable age, and then slipped out of life with characteristic modesty and in characteristic obscurity.

The other brother of Parnell I never knew, but I rather thought I saw him once at a restaurant in Victoria Station. I was almost aghast when I saw the man enter, he bore so striking a resemblance to his great brother. He was evidently a man of very restless temperament, for he entered and left the restaurant several times. I have always heard that he was obsessed throughout his life by

the mania of persecution, and never remained more than a few days in one place. He also slipped out of life unnoticed.

Fanny Parnell, 1849–1882; *Anna Parnell*, 1852–1911

As to the rest of the Parnell family, most of whom were unknown to me, I can sum up their story in a few words. The most remarkable of the sisters of Parnell was Fanny. I have already told how she was found dead in her bed. Anna Parnell was a very different type; she was plain and bony, and her manner and words froze your blood. She had all the reserve and frigidity of her brother, very much accentuated. In a short conversation with her I saw that she had a great many of his qualities—obstinacy in opinion, coldness in language—a coldness which afterwards proved, as in his case, to be but the ice which covered a volcano.

With the imprisonment of her brother and of the other leaders there came a transformation, for, as the men's Land League had been suppressed by Mr. Forster, the Ladies' Land League, as I have said, was formed to take its place. I will say no more of the operations of that remarkable body than that it was much more reckless in its practices than the men's Land League. The dominating spirit, of course, was Anna Parnell, who was both of iron courage and of absolute recklessness. Among her exploits was that of rushing up to Lord Spencer at the time of the violent coercionist régime—for which that kindly gentleman had to bear the unwilling responsibility—seizing his horse by the bridle and denouncing his policy. One of the first things that Parnell did on his release from prison was practically to extinguish the Ladies' Land League, and with that his sister. Even he could restrain her only by violent and resolute action.

With the disappearance of her brother, Anna Parnell also ceased to have any political existence. I have already told how by devious ways some of Parnell's old colleagues managed to come to her assistance, and how, finally, she was drowned while bathing at Ilfracombe—it might have been accident, but it might have been suicide.

Finally, there was a sister of Parnell who for many years was a prominent and somewhat grotesque figure in Dublin life. She used to drive through the streets in strange, highly-coloured garments. She devoted some time to a sort of biography of her brother. Ultimately, her mind being unhinged, she went into a workhouse, and died the same night.

I met another sister who made a runaway but very happy marriage with a gentleman in the Navy. Of two other sisters I know practically nothing; one was the wife of a solicitor called MacDermott, who lived in Dublin; the other was married and lived in Paris. Both, I believe, died at comparatively early ages.

The Passing of Avondale

And, finally, there is the mother of Parnell. She has figured several times in my narrative. She spent most of her life, after the death of her husband, in the United States, her native country. It was hard to say whether she could be described as wholly sane. On her side, as I have already told, there was heredity of some unbalanced mentality. She had unlimited powers of speech, feverish activity, and was as much a propagandist in the United States as any of Parnell's colleagues. As a rule, she spoke for an hour at a time; I never knew at the end of her speech what she had said, except that once she told a story of two men testing each other's power of holding their legs in a

bucket of hot water, and how when one man conquered it was discovered that he had a wooden leg.

Her death was dramatically appropriate. After long years, and when her son had been dead a long time, she returned to Avondale, the early home and property of her husband. Left alone one day in one of the rooms, and in enfeebled health, she fell into the fire and was somewhat severely burned; she died a few days afterwards.

In the confused state of Parnell's fortunes after his death the ancestral home had to be sold, and it is now a public institution. Aughavanagh—a little shooting lodge that Parnell occupied in the shooting season—had to be disposed of, and Mr. John Redmond became its owner. I do not know what its condition is now, but in Redmond's time it was the symbol of the contradictoriness and the down-at-heelness of so many Irish things, especially in that landlord class that even in my own youth was still the omnipotent factor in all Irish life. It stood on a hill many miles away from everybody and everything; it consisted of a centre which was fairly comfortable, but on both sides there was a gaping wound where the wall stood bare and empty with no roof upon it. The dust-covered and deserted mansion, the half-ruined shooting lodge were more telling tombs of the rise and the end of the fortunes of the great Parnell's family than anything in Glasnevin Cemetery, where his remains lie, or that striking statue of him in O'Connell Street, which was raised by the genius of St. Gaudens. No story of Greek history by a Greek dramatist tells of a family tragedy more striking and more complete.

THE END

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